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# 104

## THE FUTURE OF ASIA

a symposium on the  
prospects and perspectives  
facing a region

symposium participants

### THE PROBLEM

Posed by **Vidya Prakash Dutt**, Director,  
Centre for Chinese Studies

### NO DOMINOES

**G. P. Deshpande**, Assistant Editor, 'China Report'

### THE REAL CHALLENGE

Commentator, leading foreign policy analyst

### COMPLETING THE REVOLUTION

**Som Benegal**, business executive, student  
of foreign affairs

### THE FINAL VICTORY

**Rohit Handa**, Special Correspondent,  
'Hindustan Times'

### NO SUCH CONCEPT

**K. P. Karunakaran**, senior research fellow at the Indian  
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### COOPERATION FROM WITHIN

**Vishal Singh**, Head of the Department of South-east  
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Designed by **Dilip Chowdhury**

## The problem

THE post-war resurgence of Asia was both a fact and an illusion. It was real and was yet formless and nebulous. Asia had awakened but did not constitute a closely-knit community.

The countries of Asia were beginning to shake off the western imperialist yoke and respond to the challenge of modernization. They were discovering themselves and one another, but were not necessarily united in thought and action. The dawn of freedom was like a heady wine and the coming together of Asian countries provided an exhilarating experience. There were great expectations that an Asia awake and pulsating with life would soon be able to talk to Europe on a basis of equality. There was an element of elemental truth in Nehru's statement that the fate and future of Asia could no longer be decided in the chancellories of European capitals.

But the optimism about the unity of Asia was misplaced and the great expectations were unfulfilled. Freedom came but Asian countries drifted apart. Conflict and discord and violence, the pull of big powers and the creeping advance of the cold war, all these marred relations among Asian nations. Many things happened and perhaps the process of disruption and moving away was inevitable. The immaturity of the Asian countries and the historical legacy of disputes and squabbles had not been taken into account by Asians in the first flush of enthusiasm. The western powers spread their net far and wide and dangled the carrot of money and materials, economic assistance and military hardware before the hungry and defenceless countries of Asia and pushed the process of polarization. They created new problems where few existed before and aggravated tensions, as in the case of Pakistan, with their determination to build up the war machine of Pakistan free, both as a threat to the communist world and as a lever against India. The fierce blasts of the cold war blew hard and cold in the Asian continent and the Soviets also joined the fray and once again the quarrels of Europe found their echo in Asia.

Subsequently, China also became a party to the distortions in Asian developments. The substitution of Maoism for Marxism, the drive for big power status, the growing trouble with Moscow, the desire for hegemony in Asia, the escalation of the conflict with Washington, the propagation of the Chinese model for the rest of the world, the decision to discredit non-alignment, the hope of humbling and humiliating India, all served to fan the flames of conflict in Asia and weaken the possibilities of independent development of Asian countries.

India was also guilty of living in an unreal world and showing insufficient understanding of objective realities and the sharpness, the brutality and the ruthlessness of international

politics. She substituted sentiment for sense and wishfulness for a hard-headed evaluation. She paid lip service to the cause of Asian unity but took few concrete steps to promote it. She kept her eyes riveted on the big powers, ignored the host of small countries in Asia and was either unable or unwilling to make positive efforts to promote closer relations with and among Asian nations. The conflict with Pakistan and then China gradually enervated her will, distorted her vision and resulted in the total loss of initiative and resilience.

Asia fell to pieces. Hardly any two countries of Asia were genuinely friendly towards each other. Malaysia and Indonesia were engaged in an undeclared war and the relations between Malaysia and Singapore were none too happy. Thailand and Cambodia fell on each other and in Viet Nam a nationalist struggle was still raging furiously. India was locked in a triangular battle with China and Pakistan. South and North Korea continued to glower at each other and Japan was occupied with internal problems and a slow effort to heal the scars of the last war in its relations with other countries. Many countries of Asia had come under the sway of either one or the other big power and the continent appeared to be hopelessly divided, confused and troubled. Independence was becoming more a myth than a reality and neo-colonialism of one type or another was rampant.

This was the situation until yesterday and indeed is the dominant truth even today. Yet, a small but definite change is perceptible. A small speck has appeared on the horizon; will it grow and overshadow the sky? We have not yet fully grasped the meaning and the potentialities of the slow change that is coming over the Asian scene, nor have we the interest and capacity to encourage and support it. The wheel has not yet turned full circle but the reverse process seems to have started. The Asian countries have had their cup of violence and conflict full and are beginning to find it distasteful. There is a new awareness that foreign interference and intervention will provide no solutions nor cure any existing ills, that it only affords an opportunity to others to fish in troubled waters and increase their influence. Asia is gradually becoming maturer and more wise to the ways of the world. There is a new realization about the need to cooperate with and get closer to one another. As yet this trend has not gathered force but its presence is unmistakable.

Indonesia and Malaysia have decided to liquidate their confrontation and establish normal

relations. Although Singapore has broken away from Malaysia, their relations are less tense than before. A hopeful new development has taken place with the formation of ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) with accent on economic cooperation. India's relations with South and South-east Asian nations have vastly improved and there is greater awareness of our interests and obligations in this region. Japan has gradually repaired its relations with Asian countries and is more ready now to play a constructive role in the affairs of Asia; the less close its involvement with the United States the better it would be able to contribute to the stabilization and prosperity of Asia.

Even the problem of China is falling into perspective and the limitations of Peking's power is being more generally realized. Recent developments in China have aroused hope that that country might soon be willing to adopt a more helpful and statesmanlike attitude towards Asian neighbours. North Korea and even North Viet Nam have given sufficient evidence of disenchantment with the Maoist aberrations. The end of the war in Viet Nam may not yet be in sight but public opinion is gaining momentum all over the world against the conflict and the killing there.

The question is whether all these trends can be encouraged to grow so that Asia can achieve a certain homogeneity and capacity to withstand external pressures and intervention. Not all the problems will be resolved, not all the quarrels settled, but the Asian countries might be able to exercise a little more leverage in world affairs and better promote their economic development. The primary problem in Asia seems to be the establishment of a new balance which would allow maximum freedom of choice and development for the various Asian countries. This balance should not be given a cynical interpretation, nor understood in a Bismarckian sense.

At present, one or two giant powers are casting their huge shadows over the Asian continent. The United States with its far-flung and global interests and bases is one principle power, albeit a non-Asian State. China is riding the Asian continent like a colossus. In this situation a new balance is needed which would provide stability and scope for Asian countries to pursue their own paths of development and yet promote mutual cooperation to meet the challenges of the modern world. Is this a Utopian hope or are recent developments indicating a definite movement towards that direction?

The problem may perhaps best be viewed both in its short-term and long-term perspective.

In the short-term, attention has to be focussed on liquidating the war in Viet Nam and ensuring that country's right to peaceful and independent development, smothering of the embers of conflict among Asian nations, disinvolving—so far as possible—Asian countries from the politics of the cold war, promoting the economic health of the countries of this continent and moving towards a sensible understanding and evaluation of the Chinese question.

The long-term perspective must be that of providing a new, internal balance in Asia, raising regional cooperation to a higher level as in Europe and of making Asia a stronger and more important factor in world politics. The immediate realities cannot be sacrificed for the sake of dim, distant, desirable goals and the short-term problems and tasks cannot be overlooked, but at the same time our sights have to be fixed on the long-term perspective so that we could gradually move towards that direction. We must not once again get lost in the mirage of wishful thinking, but we need not also become oblivious of the goals and the heights that we could scale and the demand of the future.

There are five principal powers in Asia, whether belonging to this region or not, who have played and will possibly continue to play an important role; the USA, the USSR, China, Japan and India. Of these, the Soviet Union has generally 'been cutting its losses' and becoming more inactive, except in South Asia where, since the war between India and Pakistan in September 1965, it has played a more direct role. The conflict between the United States and China has distorted developments in Asia but it is inconceivable that the United States would continue to remain involved in a major way in the paddy-fields of Asia for an indefinite period. The United States is not an Asian power and cannot and will not hold on for too long. It would fall back on its air and naval power and as the resistance to the U.S. predominance in Asia increases, the de-escalation of U.S. presence would begin.

Viet Nam has demonstrated limitations to the exercise of power of even a super power like the United States. Even in the United States opinion is rapidly gaining strength that no vital U.S. interests are served by this massive involvement in the Asian land mass and that the effort is not worth the price. The crying need of the hour, this writer believes, is the strengthening of the independence and the capacity for stability of Asian countries so that foreign interference is neither necessary nor too easily brought about.

The question of China is of a different order. The history and geography of China cannot be

ignored in any rational planning for the future of Asia. China is a part of Asia—and an important part at that—and its presence cannot be wished away. Its fortunes are linked with Asia; the future of Asia is also linked with developments in China. It is true that China is passing through a xenophobic phase which makes the task of promoting unity and cooperation among Asian countries doubly difficult. The last phase of Maoism poses many problems for countries like India and many others. The Maoist attempt at achieving hegemony in Asia has to be resisted.

The substitution of American dominance by Chinese hegemony is no comfort to the Asian peoples and so long as the present phase lasts in China, there is little hope of a constructive dialogue with China. All the same, no meaningful programme for the gradual establishment of a new order in Asia can leave China out of its calculations. An honoured and important position for China needs to be ensured, but only if there is acceptance on the part of Peking of the equality and independence of other countries of Asia.

The possibility of such a development is not so fanciful as it might appear on the surface. Although Mao is firmly in the saddle in Peking and there is still a lot of cultural revolution left in him, the recent storm there has exposed deep divisions among the leadership and the members of the Communist Party. It has been revealed that there is a strong group of leaders and a large number of party members which look askance at the Maoist go-it-alone policy and at the attempt to establish the leadership of Mao all over the world with such disastrous consequences, and which is more willing to pursue a moderate course in the interests of China. It appears difficult to envisage Maoism being practised without Mao; no matter who Mao's successors are, they will have neither the determination nor the capacity to continue to follow the Maoist line. The extent of dissidence revealed within the party by the cultural revolution gives hope of early changes in China's attitude and relations with other countries.

It should be obvious that in the prevailing situation in Asia and the world, countries like India and Japan must be ready to function more positively and effectively. They can help in providing a new balance in Asia and in reducing the extent of foreign interference in this part of the globe. Will they take their chances and realize their potentialities? Both Japan and India have many problems, Japan because of her close link-up with Washington and India because of her massive poverty and conflict with two neighbours. But Japan, by virtue of being the most highly industrialized country in Asia, and India, by virtue of her

size, location and degree of development are both in a position to make a substantial contribution to the independence, growth and stability of the Asian countries.

Besides Japan and India, there are a number of intermediate powers in Asia—Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Malaysia and, potentially, Viet Nam. Their role will also be of considerable importance in the determination of the future of Asia. The objective has to be the establishment of conditions in which different countries of Asia can live in relative freedom and in which they could come together as in Europe to meet their common difficulties and needs. The problem to explore is whether circumstances are maturing for the realization of these laudable objectives and how to push this process in order to achieve quicker results.

One obvious and fruitful avenue of approach to this problem is to promote regional cooperation, particularly in the economic sphere. Trade and mutual assistance, to the extent possible, are important means of dismantling political and emotional barriers and reducing the explosive character of political problems. Already some steps have been taken by countries in South-east Asia to promote regional cooperation and these efforts need to be consolidated and expanded greatly in order to make any real impact. It is also essential that politics should not take command in such efforts at regional cooperation and that the economic and cooperative aspects are emphasized at the expense of ideological fervour and political animosities. India has to show greater awareness of the need for supporting and developing such cooperative efforts as well as greater willingness to take concrete action in this regard.

This may appear to be a rather painfully slow way of planning and working for the future of Asia and a new order in this continent. But it should be apparent that there are no easy or magical solutions, no cut and dried formula which would change the Asian scene overnight. We cannot let our wishes run away with the realities of the situation; the road ahead is hard and difficult. In Europe, notwithstanding the personal angularities of the General, there is no doubt that de Gaulle represents the wave of the future and the hopes and aspirations of the new generations for elimination of wars and conflict, joint prosperity of the people of various countries of Europe and 'a place in the sun' for them. Europe is coming together to promote mutual welfare and to play a more meaningful role in world affairs. Will Asia be wise and mature enough to do the same? Will and can India take the lead in pushing forward towards this goal?

VIDYA PRAKASH DUTT

# No dominoes

G. P. DESHPANDE

THE *Defence Review* of the British Government published a few months after the abortive coup in Indonesia summed up the fears of many people, particularly those in power in Asia, when it said: 'It is in the Far East and Southern Asia that the greatest danger to peace may lie in the next decade, and some of our partners in the Commonwealth may be directly threatened.'

It is clear that the threat which the *Defence Review* had in mind was from China. It has become

customary now to talk of China's threat to East and South-east Asia. The *Defence Review* did not name China but it was obvious, as Roderique MacFarquhar put it, that: 'China is the shadowy bogeyman, for only China conceivably threatens both areas; and only China is potentially a strong enough power to warrant talk of the "greatest danger to peace" for the next ten years.'

Dean Rusk lately has talked of a billion Chinese armed with nuclear weapons. It seems that although

those in power in most of South and East Asia may not choose Rusk's phraseology they will nevertheless voice their fears of China in comparable terms.

### Chinese Intentions

It is clear then that in the view of many in Asia and in the West, China's intentions and capabilities will, in large measure, determine the pattern for Asia. At present China's intentions are deemed to be very dangerous. The former Foreign Minister of India warned the South-east Asians during his visit to Singapore about 'the menace of China'. It is necessary, therefore, to examine this concept of 'Chinese bellicosity' a little more closely to ascertain how far it is a factor in today's Asian politics. Although China's intentions are a much talked about problem of Asia today, may be there are some other powers whose intentions may equally determine Asia's future. In other words, one should not rule out the possibility that the bogey of 'China's bellicosity' is being used by some powers to create a pattern in Asia more favourable to themselves.

Before we discuss China's aim and capabilities in Asia, one thing must be made very clear. Ever since the Cultural Revolution got into its stride, it has often been suggested that much would depend upon the outcome of this 'power-struggle' in China. The argument assumes that there are some 'hard-liners' and 'soft-liners' in the C.C.P. and if the moderates were to succeed in the present struggle China's Asian policy would change. The reason why this assumption is made is that China's policy in South-east Asia seems to have been in the melting pot ever since the Cultural Revolution was launched. Break with Djakarta, tension with Kathmandu, scuffle with Rangoon and unpleasant exchanges with Pnom-Penh have contributed to this impression. How does one interpret the troubles which China has had with the South-east Asian countries recently?

We need not go into the details of each affair. Suffice it to say

that this diplomatic style was a passing phase, an aberration. A lot of fence-mending has, since been done. But these stylistic aberrations should not distract our attention from the long term objectives of China's Asian policy. Even during these days of skirmishes one finds that China's policies, presumably made by the same set of policy-makers, have been both aggressive (as in the case of Burma and Indonesia) and conciliatory (as in the case of Cambodia and Nepal) at the same time. What is relevant is to see whether there is any difference between the contending parties in the present 'power struggle' in China in their respective views of Soviet and American interests in this area; for, China's attitude to South-East Asia is bound to be, at least for some time to come, a reaction to the attitudes of the super-powers.

### Sino - Soviet Rift

There have been suggestions that China's attitude to the Soviet Union would change if a non-Maoist leadership were to be ruling in Peking. This suggestion sounds almost valid, for the *People's Daily* has been talking about Liu Shao-chi as the Khrushchov of China and so on. There is, however, nothing in Liu's writings and speeches prior to the Cultural Revolution which can support this view. Secondly, the central problem of the Sino-Soviet rift has been one of a proper attitude towards the 'US Imperialists'. The Chinese have consistently attacked what seemed to them the Soviet Union's connivance at American presence in Viet Nam. They blame the Soviet Union for not supporting adequately the cause of national liberation in Viet Nam. They accuse Moscow of 'peddling peace' in Viet Nam in a manner which will permit continued American presence. On the other hand, their own policy, they say, is dedicated to helping the Viet Nameese throw out the last American.

It is conceivable that a person generally sympathetic to an international socialist line on Viet Nam may consider that both the Chin-

ese and the Soviet objectives are the same—expulsion of Americans—but that there is a quarrel only about the method of achieving it. However, in the context of a power struggle between the USA and the Soviet Union the total expulsion of Americans from continental Asia may not be as important to the Soviet Union as it is for the Chinese. No matter who is in power in Peking, China cannot and will not settle for anything less. It is thus less a question of personalities than a question of national interests. Neither Liu nor even Peng Teh-huai ever was or is in two minds about it.

### Attitude to the USA

Once this is understood, China's policy in Asia can be seen in its proper perspective. There are two points about China's attitude to the U.S.A. which are relevant here. Firstly, China's attitude to the U.S. is a part of her revolutionary experience. It springs from the Chinese belief which was summed up by Mao in his June 30, 1949 article in which he wrote: 'It (the US) wanted to enslave the whole world, it supplied arms to help Chiang Kai-shek slaughter several million Chinese...'

He further wrote: 'Would the present rulers of Britain and the United States, who are imperialists, help a people's State? Why do these countries...lend us money on terms of mutual benefit...Because their capitalists want to make money and their bankers want to earn interest to extricate themselves from their own crisis...'

One should not infer from this that China is forever going to be in a state of undeclared war with the US. But, the Sino-American tensions are unlikely to ease before the present US encirclement of China ceases or becomes in reality ineffective. Secondly, with the war in Viet Nam going on there is always a possibility that China may have to intervene. Although there is no doubt that China will do her utmost to avoid a direct confrontation with the US, the question remains more than open. There is no reason to believe that China has second thoughts about Mao's summing up of the US policy

quoted above. One does not have to agree with Chairman Mao to see that the hope that China will come to accept as inevitable American presence in some form or the other in continental Asia is so far unfounded.

### Nationalism

Is this true only of China? Both North Korea and North Viet Nam are disputing the concept of an Asia where western military presence is taken for granted. In fact they, more than China, have been busy combating American presence in mainland South-east Asia. This fact provides us with another dimension in Asian politics. It is unrealistic to view Asia's future as hanging between the extremes of American dominance on the one hand and China's hegemony on the other. To pose the problem in this manner is in reality to present the theory of dominoes in another garb. What was wrong with the theory of dominoes was not its implication that if Viet Nam were to fall, other States of South-east Asia would follow, but rather the fact that the theory only begged the question: if the South-east Asian States are after all dominoes, does it really matter if western democracies shuffled them or the Chinese communists? In other words, it completely ignored Asian nationalism.

The two major conflicts since the end of World War II, those in Korea and Viet Nam, show that Asian nationalism will determine the future of Asia for a long time to come. This nationalism is not to be confused with the effete concept of it that has been used in different countries at different times to resist the winds of change. Very often nationalism has been used by the ruling groups in Asia to resist social change within their own States. What we have in Asia today is a host of dictatorships or semi-democracies which are trying to stifle the urge for change. In this undertaking they depend on super powers whose objective seems to be to ensure 'stability' in the area.

It may not be out of place here to question what this 'stability'

means. When one looks at the political patterns of Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea, Philippines and, lately, Indonesia, one has to conclude that the major aim of this 'stability' is to ensure a favourable climate for western finance capital. It is evident that there is very little that China has been able to do to stop this. China's economic and military capabilities are limited. And here we return to our original theme of China's intentions and capabilities in South-east Asia. Acquisition of nuclear weapons has no doubt given a certain status and power to China. It has made China the only challenging power in South-east Asia. It can and will continue to resist big-power dominance in Asia. Yet, it remains essentially a weak power in as much as it cannot dictate a pattern on Asia. This, to be sure, is a result neither of large American presence in the area nor of the American policy of containment. If at all, these have contributed to China's stature as the only credible challenging power in the area. What has and will hold China at bay is the progressive nationalism of the Vietnamese and the Korean type.

Again, it is significant that if the North Koreans and North Vietnamese have any fears of Chinese hegemony, they are keeping the fears to themselves. They have not used any of the forums provided by the Soviet Union to express their fears. On the contrary, North Viet Nam confidently celebrates each year a day of their national heroine who helped to resist an earlier Chinese invasion. Who then fears Chinese hegemony? Or is it a real fear at all that China will overrun South-east Asia? Or is it not likely that it is a genuine fear of the more advanced western powers that China's way of thinking in regard to foreign capital may spread to other Asian nations and build up in Asian peoples the desire to assert their economic and political independence?

### The Lesson

Asia's future thus hangs not on China's designs but on the nation-

alism of its people as demonstrated in Viet Nam. We have to have a policy which is in keeping with this long-term trend in Asia. It is then possible to see where China's and India's policies need not conflict and the areas where they do conflict may be more manageable. China, having changed her own history in dramatic and radical fashion, will not be able to repeat her past imperialist performance in Asia for the simple reason that the success of the Chinese revolution is the success of Chinese nationalism and the lesson is not lost in the rest of Asia.

### Political Phenomenon

If the foregoing analysis is correct, the problem of economic co-operation in Asia will have to be viewed as essentially a political phenomenon. In other words, the politics of the super powers and that of nationalism in Asia cannot be separated from economic development. That economic co-operation in Asia is both feasible and desirable goes without saying, but if it is separated from its political context it will not work. The neat division between economics and politics which is sometimes very strongly recommended to the Asians as the remedy for all their ills will only conceal exploitation and will, therefore, produce instability in Asia.

What Asia needs most is the kind of leadership which will insist on development completely controlled and governed by itself and will resist increasing encroachment by western finance-capital. It does not help to shy away from the fact that stability and progress in Asian countries will have to be a predominantly Asian phenomenon. Apart from Uncle Ho and Chairman Mao, very few leaders in Asia seem to have realised that foreign interference in their affairs cannot be wished away unless they are ready to mobilise their people and resources against it. They seem to think that somehow with magic plans of economic cooperation and heavy aid-dosage they will be able to gain real political and economic independence. So long as these myths persist, Asia's future will continue to be bleak.



# The real challenge

COMMENTATOR

IS Asia in any way a political entity with a distinctive cohesion or is it merely a convenient geographical description, and that too given by the Europeans to the vast continent which lay to the East, beyond the pale of the Graeco-Roman Hebrew civilization and inhabited by the yellow and brown peoples? Unlike Europe, the culture of Asia did not flow from one common ancestry. Asia, notionally, was the exotic but pathetically backward orient; culturally it derived its inspiration from India or China, with the Mekong providing the dividing line. But over this vast and variegated cultural and political patchwork came the imposition of the West in succes-

sive waves—the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, the French and finally the British. All of them have left their imprint which persists even when their political paramountcy has been withdrawn.

Pan-Asianism was originally at least the figment of the European mind and not the vision of an Asian. But if the concept of Asia as an entity and unity has been pleaded for by the Asians, then this was due to the vision of Indian patriots. Tagore saw a unified design in the Asian heritage and Nehru saw India's crusade against European domination as part of all Asia's quest for freedom. True, political Asia was a by-product of

anti-imperialism and that too in the minds of Asian students returning to their homeland inspired by the French Revolution and John Stuart Mill.

A contrary notion was that of the Japanese, but their concept of Asia was confined to the region which she could dominate and the markets she needed for her industrial and military power—and thus was restricted to her neighbouring perimeter. Certainly, the idea of Asia was not a Marxist one where international solidarity was envisaged between the urban proletariat of all countries, cutting across national and continental frontiers.

It is not without significance that the first tentative efforts at defining a community of interest of Asian nations found expression in the conference called by the late Prime Minister Nehru and held in New Delhi in April 1947 even before India was free. And even the first Bandung Conference may not have been possible if it had not been inspired by the vision of Nehru that Asia, like other continents, must now stand up and speak for itself.

But, apart from this visionary concept of Asia which was no longer Europe, what is it that is common in this vast landscape? There is the Brahmanical Asia, the Buddhist and Islamic Asia, i.e., a mixture of many religions, races and languages. Asia remains a diversity with little which is in common but a great deal which divides it. If there was a common feature which united the vast area, from Korea to Afghanistan and beyond, it was the vague sense of a common humiliation suffered at the hands of European power and technology and a shared vision of prosperity and national dignity in the future.

### Nationalism

Two decades later, the self-confidence has gone: the vision has dimmed and Asia remains politically weak and economically backward. But, Asian nationalism, a feature common to all States, remains as strong as ever. Nationalism may have been born in the negative protest against European

domination, but it responds equally to suspicions of new encroachments, be it from a distant power or be it from a neighbouring country. In Cambodia, nationalism today may be more anti-Vietnam than anti-Thai, even if it once was a side product of French colonialism and of the suspicions of threat to its integrity and neutrality. Nearer home, nationalism in Nepal asserts itself in suspicion of India; nationalism in Pakistan is nothing more than bitterness against and fear of India. And, almost all over Asia, there are open or latent nationalistic suspicions of the threat and fear of a strong and united China, aggravated by the presence in their midst of the overseas Chinese community controlling the economic life of the newly independent countries and remaining ultimately loyal only to the country of its origin.

### The Problem

The problem for Asia is how this nationalism can attain its legitimate fulfilment. How can it be channelled towards development at home and stable relations with the international community outside? It becomes part of the internal problem of national cohesion and the search for representative or popular governments. It is more and more recognised, specially after the fall of Sukarno, that political independence itself would be tested by what it could achieve through economic progress for the people who dreamed that freedom was the panacea for poverty. It is thus linked with the march towards modernisation and technological progress, and the social and economic revolution necessary to vitalise stagnant agricultural societies. Only such progress can permit the different new-found nationalisms to keep their respective trusts with destiny.

If Asia had become free at the turn of the century, by now, after experimentation and failures, these countries may well have found their own individual path towards orderly progress. In the shrunken world in which we have become free, superimposed with a cold war which we never wanted nor could fully understand, the urge for con-

structive fulfilment was twisted by non-Asian philosophies and politics. Political freedom proved inadequate to face the formidable military and economic might of industrialised nations.

### Lessons of Viet Nam

In Viet Nam we have the crucible of the problems which came to Asia because of conflicts and manoeuvres of which the smaller nations were no part. It is a reflection of all the stages of post-world war history. The origin of the conflict goes back to the colonial era and the perverse determination of France (assisted by her allies) to return to her empire although she had been unable to protect it against Japanese militarism. For the Vietnamese people, the conflict today is literally and symbolically the continuation of the struggle against imperialism. But, it is also a reminder of the cold war, with the super powers committed to the opposing sides and Soviet and U.S. arms clashing in the paddy fields of that unfortunate land.

However the conflict may have started, it also represents the third stage in our recent history. It has now been blessed as the school for national liberation struggles illustrating Mao's and Lin Piao's manuals on guerilla warfare. Thus, paradoxically, Viet Nam also illustrates the post-cold war international detente. Such violent struggles are equally abhorrent to both the super powers: behind all their propagandist declarations, the objective of policy for both is negotiation and a stable political settlement (though understandably their views of what that pattern might be—communist or non-communist, divided or reunified—may be different). But both have at the back of the mind the consideration that this unending conflict complicates even if it does not obstruct their search for limited agreements on anything which might endanger peace. The longer the Viet Nam conflict lasts, the more it weakens and embarrasses the super powers. It proves that a people's war can be successful and that such struggles don't lead to a nuclear conflagration. Converse-

ly, the continuation of the conflict has become central to China's strategy against the world order which she thinks the two super powers in conspiracy are trying to build behind her back. It is held up as the model for similar struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Such struggles may be against colonialism and imperialism (Angola, Mozambique) but they may be against national governments (Burma and India). But everywhere they would complicate peaceful development and orderly progress and, in the Chinese calculation, prevent the perfidy of peaceful co-existence.

### The Tasks

How then can stability and progress come to this troubled continent? Learning from the Viet Nam struggle, the first task is that the legacy of imperialism must not only be eliminated but must also appear to be eliminated. This means the end of all outrages against native nationalism. Intentionally or unintentionally, the United States in Viet Nam is driving nationalism to heroic desperation. The suffering which the USA inflicts is cruel enough but she is destroying the only solid foundation of ultimate stability—which is Viet Nam's desire to construct its own destiny.

Next, assuming that the Viet Nam war would some day be over, the super powers must also dismantle the legacy of the cold war in Asia. Military pacts such as the SEATO have lost what little cohesion and utility they possessed. The commitment to interfere in determining the internal complexion of national regimes in Asia to suit the super powers and in aligning weak governments in military involvements has never proved successful and must be abandoned. It should be in the interest of both super powers to support popular governments and not use their presence to tarnish the political independence of the national governments. Non-interference and the promotion of economic stability will also by implication provide the umbrella or at least a credible deterrent

against any blackmail or direct military adventure by China.

### Unconventional Wars

The future threats to the security of Asia are not going to be of military invasion or nuclear blackmail. It is no longer a problem of communism advancing or democracy being thrust onwards at the point of a bayonet. There could be shortlived bilateral conventional wars like the Indo-Pak conflict of 1965. In the coming decade the conflicts will be the unconventional ones—in the thick tropical jungles and the distant mountain hideouts or the unprotected distant islands. These struggles may be encouraged from without but will erupt from within. They have already started, we are told, in North Thailand and North Malaysia, amongst the HUKS in Luzon island of the Philippines, in the jungles of Borneo, the outlying districts of Cambodia and the hill districts of Burma. Half a dozen simultaneous Viet Nams would strain even the mighty resources of the USA and the USSR. Even if the U.S. may not be foolish enough to get involved in another ground conflict in Asia, wherever possible China would provide the small arms and finance to soften the whole of the continent. The national armies of a country drilled in the barrack squares even with external support would be powerless in fighting the guerillas and that too in the bushes and swamps of these tropical lands.

Unlike Viet Nam, in other possible situations such conflicts may not have the anti-imperialist complexion nor be aggravated by the involvement of the super powers on opposite sides. But this may be only a marginal consolation. Such peoples' wars take root because of neglect of the economic development of the mountain and border areas of the country. They feed on the expectation which shook these societies from their century old fatalistic somnambulism and on the glaring reality of corruption and promises unfulfilled.

To prevent Asia from going up in flames we must go back to Jawa-

harlal Nehru's answer—not military alliances but popular governments working for national integration and orderly development. Peoples' wars will be curbed or controlled by imaginative political and economic programmes directed not by non-Asians but by the enlightened governments of countries dependent on popular backing.

### Regional Cooperation

Orderly economic development, especially if combined with some form of democracy, would require careful husbanding of national resources which could demand present sacrifices for future gains. But, even with discipline and austerity, no nation would be able to achieve stability in isolated splendour. Already there is an awareness that the problems of the countries of the region are parallel and inter-dependent and demand cooperation amongst the countries of the region for integrating their efforts. Compared to other continents, the idea of regional cooperation has been slow to come to Asia. Now many notions are in the air—as the plethora of alphabetical combinations suggest—ASPAC, ASA, ECAFE, ASEAN, SEAMIC.

Regional cooperation can succeed if it is purely economic, purely regional and respects the hypersensitive national sensibilities of every country. The validity of non-alignment need no longer be laboured: neutralism is only a reminder of the cold war psychology. Such cooperation must not be cemented into an anti-communistic or even anti-Chinese solidarity. The object must be for Asian countries to maximise their own development through common services and co-operative endeavour. They must avoid duplicating technology and industrial autarky and facilities which can be better provided on a planned and on a regional or a subregional basis.

Such institutions for regional cooperation can also provide the channel through which Asia can develop meaningful and dignified

relations with the developed countries. The region lacks capital and technology and has looked largely to Europe and North America for this aid. The Marshall Plan succeeded because Europe decided on the means of utilising the assistance and the know-how which flowed from the United States. If there is to be a Johnson or other American Plan, it must be funnelled through such a multilateral agency rather than risk the friction inherent in unequal bilateral relationships between a giver and receiver. The Asian Development Bank provides such an institution to assist viable national projects and ones which can only be viable on a multi-national basis.

### **Economic Progress**

If the purpose is economic growth and stability and the dismantling of militaristic commitment, there is no reason why the USSR should not underwrite the steps towards regional cooperation in Asia. Japan, already the third industrial power, clearly recognises the importance of economic development through regional cooperation and is committed to increase her assistance to Asia and this development must be welcomed.

India must also be clearly involved in such a search for the economic progress of Asia. We today lack the power and technology of Japan. Supplementing Japan, only this vast area can provide the markets for Indian industrial exports. Moreover, we can bring to Asia a non-expansionist record and a consistently enlightened interest in national independence combined with the concept of international cooperation. Our stand has always been based on non-interference, national diversity and equality of all nations.

This great design, of course, reckons without the inscrutability of Peking. It is evident that if the Chinese purpose is to disrupt the quest for stability, she will denounce the whole endeavour as a part of the imperialist-cum-revisionist conspiracy. It is evident that the essence of Chinese policy is that while committed to social-

ism, it exploits its international appeal. But even its seemingly altruistic Afro-Asian diplomacy was ultimately geared to the Chinese national purpose of uniting the area to frustrate Europe and North America led by the USA and the USSR. The concept of a stable and cooperative world order goes against the Chinese projection of the 'rural areas' of the South in confrontation with 'the cities' of the North.

### **Cooperation or Confrontation**

But in due course China too will have to learn that in the modern world there cannot be permanent confrontation: there is no alternative but an international community of independent nations living at peace and cooperating for mutual advantage. The Chinese ambitions appear more menacing in Asia owing to her proximity but it is part of the world problem—cooperation or confrontation, interdependence or defiance. Because of her size and potential, a pre-eminent position for China is assured but it is paradoxically true that in the nuclear world great nations cannot impose their will on others, and small and poor nations have far greater protection and manoeuvrability. Sooner or later China will have to realise that the nationalism of even a weak nation cannot be subordinated or even threatened into docility. Once she abandons her quest for chaos abroad, she will have an honoured place among the family of nations.

The problem of Asia is not essentially a problem of military balance. The off-frontier power of China balanced against the off-shore naval presence of the USA and the military presence of the USSR may be some kind of an umbrella which some of the countries may cherish in the short run. The real challenge is economic progress and the fulfilment of nationalism. In the longer range, the answer is that the Asian people must control their own destiny—but in a commonwealth of Asian nations cooperating as equals to ensure stability and economic growth and not as the satellite system of one or more powers.

# Completing the revolution

SOM BENEGAL

IN our less lucid and more romantic moments we are apt to think of Asia as one entity with a mystique of its own. But to expect from an area sprawling over nearly half the land mass of the earth, ranging from Japan on the Pacific to Lebanon and Israel on the Mediterranean, (and not just Asia east of Pakistan and south of Asian U.S.S.R.) and, as things stand, covering the most diverse and conflicting philosophical attitudes, ideological convictions, religious orders, social systems, political regimes and economic organisations, an identity of purpose and direction to make for a meaningful future is rubbish.

Nowhere is this lack of identity so harshly demonstrated than in the face of the most naked and shameless aggression in the history of man by American imperialism

in Viet Nam. This is one of the most crucial issues affecting the future of Asia, indeed of all oppressed peoples, perhaps of man himself—whether, in the name of upholding freedom and democracy, a super-power, far from its own confines, can cynically, against all reason, unleash a terror and barbarity out of all proportion, on a small and peaceful people in a manner designed eventually to confound, undermine and destroy those very objectives of freedom and democracy and in that course to bolster and sustain a decrepit and discredited regime of the most reactionary character repugnant to all the cherished values of of humanity.

Instead of rising in protest, standing unitedly with the Vietnamese people and rebuffing the aggressor, the nations have met this fundamental and challeng-

ing issue with either feeble admonition, or equivocation or silence or, in some cases, with actual material aid and comfort to this new imperialism. Thus, the opportunistic or craven nature of most governments in the face of over-awing might is glaringly exposed.

In considering the problems of Asia, as indeed of the world, we are often tempted to skim over issues and to look for superficial explanations and solutions. Indian bourgeois intellectuals, particularly, are prone to this type of approach. In two decades they have not come up with a single illuminating thought on any subject though in the nature of things their voice dominates the scene. On the contrary, they have either postulated a quaint nineteenth century European world-view or faithfully echoed, down to the jargon, whatever later Anglo-American profundities have been available. This is but natural since these so-called intellectuals and products of western education and their emotional, intellectual and psychological make-up is West-oriented and entirely without empathy with their own kind. Thus, their parameters are remote from Asian realities. But I believe that no true understanding can come unless we take an aetiological view.

### The Human Condition

In his half million years of life on this planet, conflict and revolution have been the condition of man. However we may try to wish it off, there has been conflict at the individual level or class level or racial level or national level or at the level of common people against tyrants and oppressors. And all historical transformations are carried out by revolution. Whether they are accompanied by violence or not is immaterial to their revolutionary character. These may appear to be self-evident postulates and at best unoriginal. But they need to be enunciated because the frustrations we come upon at every turn arise out of our ignoring them.

It is only in the light of these two factors, then, that one can

consider with any coherence the problem of Asia and its future. But, significantly, one must also remember that Asia is not alone in its predicament. The Asian peoples, in concert with similarly placed peoples of other parts of this globe as in Africa and Latin America are embattled with their tyrants and oppressors appearing either in the garb of alien nations or autocratic individuals or over-privileged elites or as usurper ruling classes wholly alienated from the people they force their rule upon, though they may pretend here and there that they have been democratically elected.

### Unending Conflict

We must, therefore, expect an unending conflict in which peoples everywhere try to assert their right to live and work and prosper and find an equitable place in the sun. The conflict will be sharpest when disparities are greatest but quiescent when one group has temporarily subdued the others, almost absent when the largest equalities have been established. The most we can hope for is to create conditions where minimum conflict is necessary and maximum stability is ensured.

But if in five hundred thousand years man has failed to discover a reasonable and harmonious organisation for tranquil existence and on the contrary has only complicated his presence on earth with the most bewildering paradoxes and inanities, it will be idle to believe that any sudden wisdom is round the corner to provide a miraculous clarification.

The tragedy of contemporary Asia is that the untenability and breakdown of manifest western imperialism and colonialism and its withdrawal or expulsion in the post-war epoch was not everywhere accompanied by the requisite revolutionary change. On the other hand, in most Asian countries feudalism and reaction, the accomplices of imperialism, were enabled to transcend once again or the imperialist regimes were succeeded by new hierarchies which

were in fact only local continuations of the old order. In this situation western imperialism found it easy to move in again in subtler forms to pose as friends and benefactors but in reality to undermine and frustrate the revolutionary transformation of Asia and the fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of the Asian people. In this, western imperialism found an eager welcome from its past collaborators and henchmen or the new exploiting class.

### The Myths

This eagerness is wholly understandable. Most Asian nations, having no regimes based on a radical, progressive and popular ideology and hence incapable of inspiring the masses to heroic tasks of economic advancement and self-reliance, require their deprecadatory ruling classes to lean heavily on imperialist assistance to maintain themselves and to keep a minimal order going. To justify this subservience they need to accept two myths propounded by the European West about itself. The first myth presumes a self-generated economic superiority of the West. The fact that the West's economic advantage has been chiefly achieved through two centuries of free-booting exploitation and seizure of the treasures of the non-European areas of the earth is conveniently forgotten; a reversal of this iniquity by which the so-called developed nations which in reality, save for Japan, are all European, are called upon to yield part of their affluence is described as a piece of altruistic generosity. And therefore Asia appears beholden to the West to save it from its problems. A constant chorus is kept up by these Asian regimes and their intellectual apologists that the West be treated with circumspection, respect and gratitude.

The second myth is purely racist in character. It is that the Europeans are intellectually, socially, culturally and in other ways superior and particularly capable of hard work in contradistinction to the non-Europeans who are all indolent by nature. This myth sedulously fostered by the ego-centric European over several

generations is, of course, preposterously absurd like all myths but it has been unquestionably accepted by the inferiority-complex ridden reactionary ruling classes of Asia whose constant endeavour is to ape as closely as possible, no matter how ludicrously, their western masters. Thus, for example, the most egregious Englishman in the world today is a ruling class Indian! Psychologically, perhaps, it is very necessary for them to do so since this alienates them from their own peoples and alienation is a basic requirement of rule by duress. The result of this distortion of the ruling class psyche is an inability to grasp problems in their true perspective, to understand the true character of popular yearnings and needs and to depend constantly on western models or western 'expertise' for solutions howsoever irrelevant and ineffectual they may be.

With such naive and willing tools ready at hand it is not also surprising that western imperialism has found it facile to engineer military blocs, prop up reactionary regimes, create tensions, interfere in national affairs, influence foreign policies, divide nations and generally increase their stranglehold on Asia.

### **Greatest Enemy**

Thus western imperialism, the *fons et origo* of the impoverishment of Asian masses and the continuing cause of their destitution, privation, and disunity is the greatest enemy of Asia. The alliance of western imperialism and self-seeking opportunistic bourgeois ruling coteries far removed from mass aspirations has led to the collapse of order and organisation, an end to progress and achievement, the erection of colossal and over-powering problems and the increasing need to use violence to put down the people. Quite obviously this must be so, for any system encouraging privilege and hierarchy, economic disparity and social stratification which keeps not the individual but a parasitic class in view as the beneficiary of social and economic endeavour, cannot bring forth alle-

giance from the millions but only rising anger and iconoclasm.

Such a situation cannot be rectified by appeals for discipline, sanity, reason, rule of law, national honour and other pompous and empty shibboleths. Only such programmes will succeed as take into account the largest and broadest masses of the people and every single component of them and give each a guarantee of opportunity and reward and a courage and vision that the future—the foreseeable future—is decisively and unequivocally his with an intensely personal commitment to it. In short, a revolutionary change of objective. Such a change cannot come about peacefully since this class will not easily surrender its position of power and privilege but fight tooth and nail using every deceitful and fraudulent argument, diversion and tactic bolstered by clarion, engines of propaganda.

### **Role of the Left**

The heaviest burden for the prevailing state of affairs must rest with the radical and Left parties in most of Asia, and particularly, for example, in India. Through two decades, instead of grasping the revolutionary significance of the situation and seizing the revolutionary opportunities available to thwart reaction and obscurantism and to lead the people on the path of true freedom and progress they have frittered away their energies in hair-splitting dogma, factionalism, sectarianism and internecine polemics. Turning their back on struggle as the means to wrest power from capitalist-bourgeois elites and hand it to the people, they have compromised and chosen the soft and easy but fruitless battle in the legislatures and revolution by walk-out and adjournment-motion. Even today when defeatism, capitulation, reaction, obscurantism and negative chauvinism rear their dark and ugly heads, ready to take to violent and bloody courses to gain an upper hand, the Left parties instead of uniting and carrying the masses with them to their deserved victory, drift divided and helpless through self-negating parliamentary plot, manoeuvre or

collaboration with their very enemies.

### **Power Imbalance**

The imbalance in Asia is as much due to the different stages of revolutionary transformation that the nations of the continent are at as to the differing levels of national power and strength of each State. We see that national power and strength are at their highest in those countries which have forsaken dependence on the West and carried out a revolutionary transformation and at their lowest where they have not. The transient affluence of some of these latter countries which rely almost solely on the prodigious induction of western aid must not blind us to their inherent weakness which will show as soon as this support is withdrawn. Indeed, as we know, some countries despite this aid are wholly untenable. As the revolutionary balance in each country is equalised, so will the power balance be adjusted between countries.

The maladjustment in the power-equation between India and China for instance can be reckoned solely by this postulate. India by virtue of every factor of history, tradition, geography and geo-politics ought to be a great power. Instead, it is an emasculated gaint while China is not. This bedevils the whole power-complex of the continent, indeed of the world. It should be easy to see that a revolutionarily transformed India which will be great and powerful will at once rectify the balance and bring about an undreamed of stability on the Asian scene. The type of great India which I envision will not be chauvinistic or expansionist because it will simply not need to be. I think it wrong to believe, as many seem cravenly to, that a great and powerful India will antagonise other countries in the region and set in motion perpetual tensions. On the contrary, it is a weak but pretentious India today which does precisely this. It invites both contempt and a nagging hope that it can be twisted around.

A strong, self-reliant India will earn respect and in that process

be responsive to its responsibilities to its fellow-nations. A dialogue with China will then be both possible and constructive and the feasibility of co-existence through mutual respect a reality. Can it be contended with any seriousness that permanent hostility between India and China with India ever under a foreign umbrella is the answer to the power-equation in East Asia? This is a bankrupt policy of utter ruin. To suggest this is not a shocking brand of apostasy.

The bitter truth is that China's attack on India in 1962 and its constant alarms since have made India over-react employing antiquated and rejected western attitudinal archetypes. The grand chorus of the West which never tires of telling India, quite wrongly, that it suffered an unforgettable humiliating defeat (as though American, British and French arms have not suffered worse humiliations and survived without perennial reminders) has demoralised some Indians who have accepted this absurdity without demur.

But India and China, let it be remembered, despite vicissitudes from time to time, are the two civilisations and peoples who have survived longest in history and out-lived all others. Neither is likely to break the other so soon. History is replete with examples of implacable foes who have turned into friends under changed circumstances, or at any rate learned to suffer each other in peace. Patriotism and nationalism did not have to be sacrificed to reach these solutions. Hostility between nations can be policy for some time but permanent hostility cannot be a permanent policy.

#### **China's Ostracism**

The second great tragedy of post-war Asia is the resolute ostracism of China from the world comity through American stubbornness. It is extraordinary when even fascist countries have a place in the United Nations that China alone should remain outside and indeed even excluded

from almost all international life and participation. No nation or individual can stand ostracism for long without developing the most frightful complexes. Certainly, one would expect that a big and proud country would not either. And yet for over twenty years China has had to remain out in the cold gathering acid in her soul.

It is the nations around her that have to bear the brunt of the explosive complexes built into her. There seems little hope of any sane and stable conditions till this unnatural situation is reversed. Her bitter hostility to everyone—even her ideological imbroglio with the USSR—must be seen in this context and certainly with greater perspicacity than hitherto. There might be some secret glee at this state of affairs and an attempt to snatch a dividend out of it but it can only be at the expense of a profounder loss and tragedy. This might suit some powers but Asia will never find rest till China's personality is unwarped.

#### **Psychological Transformation**

Bi-lateral or regional economic, trade, cultural and other exchanges and cooperation between Asian countries are certainly necessary and useful if only to bring about a greater awareness and appreciation of each other and a lesser dependence on the West. But these are only palliatives to the fundamental distemper.

A more lasting solution can only depend on a psychological transformation by which the myth of European and white superiority is exploded and totally rejected, imperialism in every form is ruthlessly liquidated and expelled, historical iniquities are reversed, feudalism and reaction are wiped out, the earth's bounty is forced to be commonly shared, a progressive ideology taking into account the masses of the people is impressed everywhere and the thwarted revolution in Asia is completed.

Then alone will the minimal conditions of conflict exist and a prosperous and stable future for Asia be even a thinkable possibility.



# The final victory

ROHIT HANDA

SINCE I am not an astrologer, nor am I affluent enough as yet to afford one, so to keep on the safe side I feel entitled to say at the very beginning that as in the infinite past, so in the infinite future, Asia as a geographical entity will retain its present mass and shape—barring those changes as may be brought about by such works of nature as erosion, earthquakes and floods, and by such works of man

as 'peaceful' nuclear explosions or military ones, deforestation, afforestation and the reclamation of deserts and lagoons.

But, since the limits within which mass and shape change are not quite applicable to the quirks of political behaviour, one must necessarily go out on a limb to speculate about such uncertain quantities as 'leaders' to prognosticate on 'Asia's future'. Frankly,

while trying to conjure up an image of the shape of things to come, a void comes up before the mind's eye; 'time past and time present merge into time future'. (Pardon me if the quotation is not quite exact). And a great weakness of the kind of exercise in which the Editor of SEMINAR has asked me to engage in, is that he has not specified the limits within which one must keep oneself either with respect to situations or people.

Limits can be of two (perhaps three) types: (a) points in time future, like 1984; (b) the effect of anticipated turns of history, like the death of Mao Tse-tung or the withdrawal of the American forces from the soil, though not the seas, of Asia; and (c) the probable impact of 'expected' social change, such as the abolition of the harem in Saudi Arabia or the workers of Asia uniting or factory foremen carrying out a coup d'etat against both capitalists and communists, and thereby establishing a technocracy.

### The Fateful Day

Since I feel a certain diffidence in forecasting futures (even the most experienced people in this line want to base their finds on something concrete, like the time of a person's birth and phase of Mars and the rocket Saturn at the time) in a vacuum of time, as it were, I shall take the liberty of setting the date of Asia's birth on which I shall base my forecast of Asia's future as the day on which the People's Liberation Army crossed the Himalayas in October 1962: for on that day the leaders of the countries of Asia were forced to take sides between 'proletarian internationalism' and social democratism: that is between enjoying the best of the one world of Mao's making or the best of four worlds: that of Uncle Sam's making; that of Lenin's making; that of Nehru's making and that of God's making.

That the fall of Nefa has a significance for Asia till 1984 is clear from the arms build up that is now going on in this continent. For, it became clear that what the

cynical Hobbs had said about covenants not being worth the scrap of paper they are written on became true of the Panch Shila—and Camus' dictum about 'he who controls the police is right' applied from then on to Asian diplomacy as well.

### The Possibilities

To assess Asia's future, therefore, one must assess the military and diplomatic possibility in the next fifteen years. There are four powers in Asia: The Soviet Union, China, the USA and India. Of course, since power is as much a function of technology as of size and the availability of cannon fodder, it would be tempting to add Japan to the list of countries around which Asia will evolve. But then that would mean granting Israel a similar status. Since this would complicate matters very greatly indeed, I prefer to grant Japan the same influence in Asia's future as England enjoys in Europe today.

Some people may also argue that such a four power model is based on the assumption that India will remain united even during Mrs. Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister or that China will not split up after the death of Mao Tse-tung or that the Soviet Union and the USA will not devastate each other in a thermo-nuclear holocaust. But we are leaving out the extreme possibilities: for extremism carries the germs of its own destruction within it. For example, as weapons become more sophisticated, sophisticated war becomes more obsolete; and as ultra-nationalism grows so does the realisation that after all we have to share one country and one planet—and because of the population explosion and the proven efficacy of the economics of scale, the more elbow room the better.

The centre of Asia (that is the area where the Soviet Union, China and India meet) is where the future of the continent will be decided. And, since America can only play a peripheral role in this region, its influence in the political future of Asia will weaken, espe-

cially as the technological revolution which it has ushered into the world is grasped by the Asian peoples, just as it has already been grasped by Japan. Therefore, the variables in my four main and umpteen subsidiary power models can be modified by keeping the limitations on America's capabilities in mind.

### China

If Mao Tse-tung dies before 1984 (and unlike John Brown) his soul smoulders with his body in the grave, the chances are that the three mainland Asian powers will from time to time change verbal sides without testing each other's strength in the field of battle. But Mao's 'cultural revolution' is aimed precisely at inviting China's youth to bloodshed and inculcating it with a sense of values which must seem macabre to those of us who have been brought up to believe in *ahimsa*, the rule of law, and the like. And, try as hard as Mrs. Gandhi might, she cannot expect to impart a military training to India, not even if she were to appear with medals of valour across her chest at public meetings. Nor, of course, can she last for long as a leader or even attain the status of Mao. Therefore, while it is pretty much certain that Mao will be followed by Mao-like heirs, it is by no means certain what kind of leadership will emerge in India. But it is possible to say that the Chinese threat itself will dictate that the size and the power and the influence of the armed forces will grow. Thus, any new leadership will either be bound by the advice of the armed forces, or will itself be knowledgeable enough in the conduct of military diplomacy to bear up to the Sino-Pakistan threat. India's enemies will thrust military greatness on her, just as Russia's enemies provoked Moscow into budgeting for super power status.

On which side of the Himalayas will the Russians be? There are three possibilities: (a) Since both Peking and Moscow would like the Papacy of Communism to be located in their own prefecture, the Pope in the Kremlin may find

it easier to poselytise the Hindu heretic rather than talk to the renegade Archbishop of the Forbidden City, who will be considered beyond the pale anyway; (b) Moscow and Peking may come together to save Asia from 'imperialism and its running dogs'; (c) an Indo-Soviet entente may invite Armenia to join it in containing China; and (d) the situation may remain confused, everybody living for the day and each playing footsie with the other to maintain a balance of power. Some of the permutations and combinations are an Indo-Soviet alliance against China; a Sino-Indian alliance against the Soviet Union; a Sino-Soviet pact against the USA and India; a Soviet American entente against India and China—each understanding being aimed at keeping the other power in check.

#### **In India's Favour**

Of these possibilities, the chances are that in any international combination, the balance vis-a-vis China will be slightly in India's favour because, so far as one can see, India will never have the audacity to stake a claim on the territory of Russia or on the leadership of Asia. It will be a mere camp follower of whoever can check the other from becoming a leader. And in this process it will acquire nuclear status, thus being in a position to defend itself against China's blackmail without the aid of a super power and also being able to lend credible support to anyone who is against the hegemony of one power in Asia.

But Asia will not be composed of the big four alone. Smaller nations, like Japan, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Arabs, will gradually build up enough strength to stand on their own feet and even form a third bloc, just like the one being formed in Europe, which exerts enough pressure on the bigger nations to keep them from assuming overweening attitudes and becoming power-hungry. With Asia in nuclear stalemate, with each power suspicious of the other, the smaller nations will show that influence cannot be gained by guns alone. The Americans are learning this lesson in Viet Nam,

and the moment there is nuclear parity between Peking and Delhi, the Chinese may learn the same lesson in Tibet.

#### **Social Mores**

What will the effect of this stalemate of power be on the economic and social mores of Asia? In many respects this is the most fascinating aspect of Asia's future. Let me give just one example of the kind of pot-purri we can expect. Last summer I was trekking in the Himalayas in Kannaur. One boy who had received training in guerilla warfare at one of the schools set up for the purpose in the district was my porter. During a long talk he explained to me that with the coming of education and the border roads, people in his village were getting intoxicated by new ideas. The system of polyandry was disappearing and each boy was now demanding the luxury of a separate wife—and you know how women are about property?" he said. 'Land is short and holdings are getting fragmented, the family is breaking up. People want transistors and consumer goods and work so that they can be bought.' And a soldier of the Indo-Tibet Border Police described with some amusement that troops of the People's Liberation Army behaved like hippies when Bombay film songs were played over loud-speakers in exchange for the thoughts of Mao. Most of the songs I heard were copies of familiar American tunes.

It is odd that on the one hand Asians should be fighting off the Americans while on the other hand yearning for the cola culture. But since the latter can only be had by the application of science to life rather than the application of science to war, by 1984 America will have won the day in Asia, as it did in the Soviet Union, on the culture plane, though not, happily, on the battle front. Where Mao, Marx and Freud and Adam Smith meet good living is the only thing that can prevent the high-strung from imploding. And I believe that the stability and prosperity of Asia will increase as it preserves the peace by preparing for war.

# No such Concept

K. P. KARUNAKARAN

ASIA is a geographical unit only in a very limited sense—there were few political similarities among Asian countries. Such expressions as 'oriental despotism' are more indicative of the prejudices of those who invented them than a precise definition of the political system which existed in Asian countries.

Equally vague was the expression 'Asian resurgence'. It had some relevance in the few years immediately following the second world war because there was a political awakening in almost all the Asian countries in that period. This awakening manifested itself in some countries in the form of political movements demanding liberation from colonial yoke and in some other countries, which had achieved freedom, in the shape of the demand to organize new political institutions and to make them work. While Indonesia and Indo-China belonged to the former group, India and Pakistan belonged to the latter. The task before the national leaders of countries like Egypt and Iran was to achieve economic freedom and make their status as sovereign States really effective.

Japan was perhaps the only Asian country which was free before the war in the legal and

real sense of the term. It lost that freedom in the post-war period. The awakening in Japan took the form of democratising its political structure. This was achieved and later the country became free. China stands as a case by itself. In that country the nature of the political leadership of the communist party, which finally became dominant, gave a new meaning to the political and economic freedom which China began to enjoy gradually.

Thus, we note that even in the period of the so-called Asian resurgence, i.e., during the few years immediately following the war, the political complexion of one Asian country was different from that of the other. But at that time there was an anti-western political orientation in almost all the Asian countries. And, excepting Japan, the Asian countries also felt that they were economically underdeveloped. This led to many leaders of the Asian countries having a similarity of outlook both on economic and political questions.

But it was not surprising that even then very few responsible leaders contemplated in any big way a unity of action on the part of the Asian governments. This

is not to deny that they did not want to co-operate on some specific issues. The first Asian Relations Conference held in 1947 was a non-official meeting. It did not go very much beyond expressing the widespread protest of the Asian people against the refusal of the western powers to part with their domination in Asian countries which were still struggling to be free.

### The Landmarks

When the Dutch tried to re-establish their power in Indonesia in 1948, Asian unity found greater concrete expression and a conference of Asian States was convened in New Delhi. But it was not an accident that Australia was invited to it because there was a growing realization that one must look beyond Asia even in regard to such a specific issue. Addressing the Conference, Pandit Nehru, who made the key-note speech, observed that they had not met there in a spirit of hostility to a nation or a group of nations. There was a continuous attempt to get the support of the Soviet Union and the U.S. to Indonesia's cause.

The next important land-mark was the Bandung Conference in which the African States were also represented. Again the attempt was to look beyond Asia. The Asian-African group in the U.N. also worked in the same spirit. A few years ago when there was a debate whether an Asian-African conference or a non-aligned conference should be convened first, India insisted that the non-aligned conference should be given priority. This was a concession to the view that geographical proximity was less important than political affinity so far as international co-operation was concerned.

India's stand on this matter was due to, among others, the fact that it was having sharp differences of opinion and even conflicts with Pakistan and China. India is not the only Asian country which is having increasing conflicts with its neighbours. The main trouble spots and sources of friction are

no more in Europe but in Asia and in Africa.

India can no more be a symbol of Asian unity, because there were even bloody wars between India and Pakistan and India and China in recent years. The relations between India and Indonesia were also not always cordial. All these countries are significant powers of Asia. In the Middle East there is a continuing conflict between the Arab powers and Israel. And there is also a cold war between some of the Arab powers themselves. While some of the Arab powers are turning towards Moscow for diplomatic and military support, others have laid their eggs in the American basket.

There are conflicts between China and many countries of South East Asia. But there are some countries in the region like Cambodia which will not go against China. North Viet Nam and the major political force in South Viet Nam—the Viet Cong—are apparently friendly towards China. Nepal will not antagonise China in the near future. Any attempt to have an identity of outlook on foreign affairs will only lead to further conflicts in Asia which is already full of trouble spots.

### Realistic View

A realistic view of Asia's future should be based on the realisation of the fact that there will be increasing differences of opinion on many vital matters of international policy among the Asian countries. There will be a larger number of colours and hues in the political and economic maps of Asia than those in its physical map. There are controlled democracies of the Left and Right variety in Asia. There are parliamentary democracies also. Apart from the differences of political structures, the differences in the size of the countries is also a factor which reduces the sphere of co-operation among the Asian countries.

Another question to be examined is the nature of the economies of Asian countries. As was noted

earlier, excepting Japan, they were once broadly classified as under-developed or politely referred to as developing nations. Now even this generalisation may not be applicable. The rate of growth of some Asian countries is very fast.

This rate is not very high so far as India is concerned. But it is significant that this rate is very high in some advanced sectors of the Indian economy such as engineering. And this country is in search of markets in such fields which it has found at least temporarily, in a highly advanced country like the Soviet Union.

The tempo of advance which China is experiencing now in some special branches of technology may very soon push it towards the group of economically advanced countries.

### World Community

There is a widespread discussion on the impact of technological revolution in warfare. One aspect of this is the rapid improvement in communications and it is not confined to the movement of weapons. This development will very soon reduce the cost of the transport of goods. By the time some of the Asian countries move towards a European type of economic community—if at all it takes place—it may not be advantageous to the countries concerned. There is no reason why an Asian country must not trade more with a European, African or a country in the western hemisphere than with another Asian country. The geographical proximity, racial affinity, and a resentment against the West due to historical reasons will very soon be superseded by other factors which will have greater bearing for the future.

Politically, economically and strategically there is no such concept as Asia. It exists only in history and geography. A realistic view is to accept the fact here and now and for the Asian countries to formulate their domestic and foreign policies on the assumption that they are, like other countries, members of the world community.

# Cooperation from within

VISHAL SINGH

IN Asia, attempts have been made either to seek cooperation at all-Asian and Afro-Asian levels or to confine it to smaller regions. The Asian Relations Conference of 1947 and the famous Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian nations in 1955 are instances of attempts of the first type. In the second category could be included the S.E.A.T.O., the Maphilindo concept of cooperation among Malay nations and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which expanded out of the ASA idea.

As against these, no serious attempt has been made to think of an intermediate area of cooperation, i.e., Southern Asia which would include India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Nepal and all the countries of South-East Asia extending from Burma to the Philippines. In the opinion of this writer, there are some obvious advantages for the above-mentioned countries if they agree to cooperate in this general area. At this stage it may be mentioned that at the half-forgotten Baguio Conference of 1950, a suggestion was made to encourage cooperation among the countries

of South and South-East Asia. The Colombo Plan also seeks to coordinate economic development in the same area.

A brief review of various attempts at regional cooperation would be useful before we examine the viability of South Asian cooperation. As early as in the twenties, there was talk about cooperation among people of Asia. At the Bierville (Paris) Congress for Peace held in August 1926, there was issued the 'Manifesto of the Asiatic Delegation' which concluded by saying: 'Let China, India and the rest of Asia be free. Then you would have built up a family of free people willing to live together in cooperation and more than that, you would have eliminated the most potent causes of war.' It was signed by delegates from Annam, Azerbaijan, China, India and Indonesia. The last two signatories were K. M. Panikkar and Mohammed Hatta.

The theme of all-Asian cooperation was pursued in a resolution of the AICC in September 1945 which stated, among other things: 'A free India will inevitably seek

the close and friendly associations with her neighbouring countries, and would especially seek to develop common policies for defence, trade and economic and cultural development with China, Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and Ceylon as well as the countries of the Middle East.' It is well known that Indian foreign policy did not quite take the turn suggested in the above resolution. There was no attempt to develop defence arrangements with any of the Asian countries, this being barred by the concept of non-alignment. The pursuit of friendly ties with China ended in the 1962 attack by the country on India as a part of its attempt to reshape alignments in Asia.

There is no doubt that at the Asian Relations Conference held in March-April 1947, India did make a serious attempt to pursue the cause of Asian unity. Jawaharlal Nehru remarked at the opening session that 'the whole spirit and outlook of Asia are peaceful, and the emergence of Asia in world affairs will be a powerful influence for world peace.' The conference led to the creation of an Asian Relations Organization 'to foster friendly relations and co-operation among the peoples of Asia and between them and the rest of the world.' It is interesting to note that this organization faded away some time in the mid-fifties.

### Major Role

It is important to remember that though this sub-continent was divided in 1947, India did emerge as the strongest Asian country at that time. In this sense, India was equipped to play a major role in Asian and world affairs. The policy of non-alignment did serve as a useful instrument for this role. India's independence directly resulted in the independence of Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma. India was called upon and did play a major role in the independence of Indonesia. It is not without interest to observe that the China of Chiang or of Mao did not contribute in any way to the independence of Asian countries. The struggle in Viet Nam under the

leadership of Ho Chi Minh had its own momentum.

The New Delhi Conference on Indonesia in January 1949 was again an exercise in Asian unity besides promoting the cause of Indonesian independence. The participants ranged from Egypt to the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> The conference, however, included besides the Philippines the following potential members of a Southern Asian system of cooperation: Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan. The conference resolved that the participants, should 'consult among themselves' in order to promote cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.

### The Nearest Point

In the opinion of this author, it was at the Baguio Conference of 1950 that the Southern Asian countries came nearest to close understanding. At this conference attended by Australia, Ceylon, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, a framework was arrived at which, with sufficient will on the part of the participants, could provide for cooperation among them. The final communique of the conference recommended to the participating governments that they 'seek joint action so as to exercise due influence in the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other international organizations.' More important, it asked them 'to ensure that in the consideration of the special problems of South and South-East Asia, the point of view of the peoples of this area, be prominently kept in mind.' The Baguio Conference, however, did not contribute much towards cooperation in Southern Asia, because its sponsor, the Philippines, was linked too closely with the United States and India did not wish to associate itself with anti-communist participants at the conference.

The next conference where Southern Asian countries met was

1. Other participants were Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, Ethiopia, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen.

the Colombo Conference of April-May 1954. The participants were India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia. Having met 'to exchange views and discuss problems of common interest and concern to them all', the final communique called for a cease-fire in Indo-China and asked France to commit itself irrevocably to the complete independence of Indo-China. It also expressed concern about the hydrogen bomb and weapons of mass destruction. It also listed other items on which agreement was reached. They included support for admission of China to the U.N., condemnation of colonialism and interference by 'external Communist or other agencies', sympathy for the Arabs of Palestine, and convening of an Afro-Asian Conference.

The conference held at Bandung was perhaps the supreme achievement of the Afro-Asian idea. With 24 participants from far and wide in Asia, it was an impressive demonstration of the coming together of the emancipated peoples of Asia and Africa. It also called for cooperation in economic and cultural fields, supported the principles of human rights and self-determination and agreed that 'colonialism in all its manifestations' should be brought to an end. It is a sad commentary on the fate of the idea of Afro-Asian unity that the conference's recommendation for a second conference could never be carried out.

### Declining Interest

Since then, many Southern Asian countries have attended conferences of non-aligned nations. With increasing rapprochement between the super powers and differences among the non-aligned countries themselves, non-alignment has lost its old magic. The Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 gave a blow to what remained of the Colombo Powers' system of cooperation and consultation.

An attempt was made to make an anti-communist alliance in South-East Asia through S.E.A.T.O. Opposed by India and Indonesia,

the treaty was signed by only three Asian countries: Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand. Non-Asian participants were: Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand and the U.S.A. The S.E.A.T.O. is now generally understood to be an ineffective organization. Pakistan's participation in this organization and consequent supply of arms to it increased Indo-Pakistan tension and it may have indirectly led to the 1965 war.

One of the by-products of the Indonesian confrontation to Malaysia was the idea of Maphilindo, 'the proposed Confederation of Nations of Malay origin' due to include Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia. According to the Manila Declaration of August 1963, the three countries shared 'a primary responsibility for the maintenance of the stability and security of the area from subversion in any form or manifestation.' The idea of Maphilindo could never get off the ground because of the failure of Indonesia and Malaya to resolve their differences.

The latest attempt at regional cooperation has been that between Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia which have got together to form the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). In their ASEAN Declaration of 8 August 1967, the countries have expressed their determination 'to ensure their stability and security from external interference.' They have also promised to collaborate for economic growth, social progress and cultural development. It may be mentioned here that the ASEAN is only an enlarged version of Southeast Asia (ASA) created on July 31, 1961, for cooperation between Thailand, the Philippines and Malaya.

#### Reasons for Failure

After this balance sheet of various attempts at regional cooperation, the question arises why most of these have failed to survive even for a few years. The survival of S.E.A.T.O. in an anaemic form is explained only by American patronage. The failure of the attempts can only be seen

in the light of the fact that the regions envisaged were either too big or too small. Sometimes the region had one big country and many small nations. Sometimes a region was overshadowed by neighbouring giants. ASA was no match for Indonesia. Even ASEAN is weak in relation to China. Afro-Asian unity was too unwieldy and unmanageable. The countries of South Asia mentioned at the beginning of this essay will have a total population of 800 millions. Most of the countries have a colonial past and are faced with the problems of developing economies. Most of them compete with each other to sell their primary products. A great part of the world's resources of rubber, jute, rice, tin, copra, iron ore and coal is to be found in this area. With close cooperation these countries may work together for their prosperity.

#### Regional Context

So far as the tensions between the countries are concerned, these can perhaps be better resolved in a regional context. In any system of South-East Asian cooperation, Indonesia is likely to loom large. The same is true of India in South Asia. In Southern Asia, both these countries will find their proper places. Pakistan, Ceylon and Singapore would find it easier to cooperate purposefully with their larger neighbours in a Southern Asian context. It is indeed sad that none of the Southern Asian countries has been able to contribute towards the solution of the Viet Nam question. Perhaps a Southern Asian Community could be of help in a similar situation.

The success of a venture of this type will require great statesmanship on the part of the larger countries of the region. Just now the region is being interfered with by external forces. A solution of Indo-Pakistan problems should be found within the region. The fire in Viet Nam should be extinguished by the joint endeavours of South Asian nations. If they can cooperate among themselves they will be able to cooperate with other areas of the world.



# Books

**COMMUNIST CHINA IN WORLD POLITICS** By  
Harold C. Hinton.

Macmillan, London, 1966.

The book under review is one of uneven quality. A great deal of information already available in published form has been brought together in an attempt to present an account of major issues in world politics involving the People's Republic of China. The sources used are virtually all western; they are principally newspaper reports, articles in periodicals, books, and English translations of some Chinese materials. To the extent that this varied mass of information is brought together in one place, the book has a certain usefulness. It must, however, be used with considerable care because of the absence of adequate corroborative and supporting evidence for some of the author's interpretations.

Hinton is on the staff of the Institute of Defence Analysis of the George Washington University which is located in the capital of the United States. A significant proliferation of such 'institutes' has taken place in that country in recent years. Many persons associated with these institutes are not engaged principally in the kind of teaching and research that one usually associates with university teachers. Many researchers in the 'institutes' engage in 'contract research' commissioned and financed by governmental agencies like the Defence Department.

The governmental agency that sponsored the work under review is not identified. Hinton says in his preface that he owes a debt of gratitude, among others, to a category of individuals who had contributed to his 'knowledge and understanding of the problems touched on in this book in other ways than through published writings'. He adds that he does not 'feel free' to mention the names of these persons. To what extent some of the uncorroborated appraisals that he offers are based on information given by such sources cannot be determined. This

situation does create some problems for the serious reader. Let me cite some examples.

Hinton asserts that Stalin probably intended to launch a pre-emptive attack against Yugoslavia before it became too strong and 'before the incoming Eisenhower administration had time to get a firm grip on affairs'. (p. 224). His discussion of Stalin's death is even more intriguing. If you are harbouring the impression that Stalin died a natural death, Hinton is ready to counter it with a much more dramatic story. According to him there is 'a strong possibility' that Stalin was killed on the initiative of elements in the Soviet military high command and civilian leadership. These civilian and military leaders decided to do away with their leader because Stalin was getting ready to take drastic action 'on behalf of the CPR (Chinese People's Republic) and in connection with the Korean war.' Hinton would have us believe that the world stood close to general war because of the step that Stalin proposed to take. (pp. 478-80). The reader who accepts his hypothesis can only conclude that Stalin's murderers were benefactors of mankind and champions of peace.

What Hinton describes as a 'plausible explanation' of Khrushchov's downfall belongs in the same category. Once again mankind is seen to be rescued from a major disaster by elements that were close to the doomed leader. Around July 1964, Hinton surmises, Khrushchov had decided to knock out China's nuclear installations 'with a missile strike probably with non-nuclear warheads.' The strike was to be launched immediately after the first Chinese test. Some of Khrushchov's colleagues who became aware of his plan, tipped off China and the latter sought to deter Khrushchov by a threat to invade Outer Mongolia. The Mongolian leader, Tsedenbal, thereupon 'probably urged Khrushchov' either to come to the aid of his country or to drop his project to bomb the Chinese installations. Con-

cludes Hinton: '...some at least of those of Khrushchov's colleagues who were aware of the situation must have considered this (projected attack on Chinese installations) to be a classic example of "harebrained scheming". ...The only solution, as with Stalin in February, 1953, was to remove the dangerous leader with the minimum necessary use of force.' (p. 480).

That is not all. Hinton goes on to add a James Bondian touch. Marshal Sergei S. Biryuzov 'whose cooperation would have been essential to Khrushchov's plans' was killed in an air crash near Belgrade on 19 October 1964. The accident took place on a day when the weather in the Belgrade area was only 'moderately bad'. It was likely, Hinton tells us, 'that the Soviet secret police (KGB) or its Yugoslav counterpart had somehow gotten access to the control tower and guided the aircraft into a mountainside. In this way the principal soldier who had probably been privy to Khrushchov's plans, and one who evidently remained loyal to him, was prevented from talking, or possibly defecting.' (p. 482). No evidence worth anything is cited by the author to support such interpretations. How relevant are such speculations for an understanding of 'China in world politics' which is supposed to be the author's theme?

In the preface to his work Hinton makes a statement concerning his personal faith and his attitude towards China. We are told that he is as much opposed to China as a preacher would be opposed to sin. 'I believe that the freedom and progress of individuals and communities are best promoted in an open, pluralistic political environment, such as the extreme right and extreme left do their best to prevent or eliminate,' he asserts. It is interesting to note in this connection that the modest efforts that India has been making to preserve and foster such an environment have not caught Hinton's fancy; at any rate they have certainly not made him a partisan of India in its border dispute with China. His discussion of the border dispute winds up with this peroration: 'In this way India precipitated war with a stronger enemy...' Hinton adds that 'a fair-minded observer in possession of the facts' would have to concede that China was offered some provocation by India. (pp. 299, 307).

It may be mentioned, in passing, that Hinton is quite unhappy over what he describes as the 'precipitate and unnecessarily large programme of American aid to the Indian ground forces' given before September 1965. Such aid had strengthened India's position against Pakistan, made India 'somewhat more reluctant to make necessary compromises over Kashmir,' and driven Pakistan 'at least temporarily into the arms of the CPR'. Hinton may be as strongly against sin as a preacher, but his aversion to India seems to be even greater.

Hinton's conclusion is that 'the record to date of Communist Chinese foreign policy in promoting the CPR's objectives, both national and revolutionary,

has been fairly impressive.' How valid is this appraisal, considering the subsequent course of China's relations with Indonesia, Burma and Cambodia and its efforts in Africa and Latin America?

A reader will search in vain in this work for meaningful clues that may explain why Peking has been flailing away in virtually all directions in recent years.

V. R.

**THE CHALLENGE OF FOREIGN AID—Policies, Problems, and Possibilities** By Jacob J. Kaplan. Frederic A. Praeger, 1967.

**THE POLITICS OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN ASIA** By Lalita Prasad Singh.

University of Missouri Press, 1966.

The course of political and economic developments in aid-giving and aid-receiving countries during the past 22 years, has given rise to a very large number of dissertations and studies and it is but natural that the problems involved should have been looked at from many points of view. For a considerable period of time, the natural enthusiasm of the successful, and the optimism of countries that wanted to emulate their example, worked in favour of numerous theses in support of aid-giving and aid-receiving. Now, as the 'Development Decade' draws to a close, it is equally natural that hard headed appraisals should take place, and the benefits which have accrued to developed and developing countries should be taken into account.

Kaplan's study is an excellent example of political comprehension of economic problems, benefited by practical experience of aid administration. He looks frankly at the problems of foreign aid as administered by the United States of America from the U.S. political point of view. His survey of the foreign policy background of the U.S. aid programmes is lucid, and while his classification of the countries involved into four groups—the U.S., the communist countries, other developed countries, and developing nations—may be simple, it has some logic to commend it. His enunciation of the development of U.S. foreign aid objectives is frank, and his exposition of 'the economic development syndrome' makes interesting reading. He lists as a dubious assumption the belief that economic growth is a priority U.S. interest in the poorer nations of the world. To him, a second questionable assumption is that economic development is so high on the priority lists of governments in developing countries that they will be prepared to subordinate other interests to it.

Kaplan is not confused by the jargon of development economists; and he does not see the U.S. foreign aid programme as a missionary burden. He looks upon it as a policy for achieving U.S. national objectives. If some of the objectives are not clearly defined, understood, and pursued, there is likelihood of waste, mis-utilisation and consequent disillusion-

ment. Kaplan proposes new criteria for the selection of countries which should receive aid, new standards for multi-lateral institutions, and re-organisation of U.S. Aid agencies with a view to obtaining for the U.S. foreign aid programmes a wider acceptability within the United States. He is not recommending a reduction of U.S. responsibilities, but is not reluctant to suggest the elimination of ineffective programmes. He would support a greater volume of foreign aid, on the understanding that the programmes should be framed in a manner that would make them more acceptable to Americans.

It is possible that in this book, which is primarily addressed to Americans, Kaplan has not given much weight to problems of diplomacy in the field of foreign aid administration. The language of diplomacy is often somewhat involved, but not without purpose; and it is not unlikely that many persons currently engaged in the implementation of foreign aid programmes would find fault with Kaplan's interpretation of U.S. national interests, and his appraisal of the effectiveness or failures of aid programmes. They are hardly likely to admit as freely as he has claimed, the co-relation between aid programmes and their national foreign policy objectives, as enunciated by Kaplan.

For developing nations, however, it is both necessary and worthwhile to understand the manner in which the minds of many men in aid-giving nations function, for it is only through this understanding that they can hope to obtain aid of the type and in the quantum that is compatible with their own long term interests.

Lalita Prasad Singh, in his study of 'the politics of economic cooperation in Asia' examines Asian economic organisations, and the political forces, machinations and initiatives behind them with meticulous care. He traces the origins of the various organisations, the political considerations that influenced membership in them, their organisation structures, and their modes of operation, through a multitude of documents, and provides a useful source of information on ECAFE, the Colombo Plan, and other Asian organisations for economic cooperation. Singh started his work at the University of Allahabad, where he obtained his Master's Degree, and continued it at the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi and the Australian National University, Canberra. The book bears prominently the marks of an academic thesis. It is objective in that it takes into account a great variety of facts on record. But for the same reason, it does not develop conclusions or isolate highlights in the situation. The final chapter on 'Obstacles to Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia', however, shows his considerable understanding of the political obstacles that divide the countries of Asia. The book is useful reading for any one who wants to know the factors which have to be reckoned with in any effort to develop a system of economic cooperation among countries that stand divided not only on account of historical factors, but also because they

see each other as competitors for small and possibly declining favours from wealthier nations.

Singh's appreciation of the role of India in ECAFE is of special interest and should be useful for many of our younger diplomats.

J. N. Thadani

**THE NEW ASIA** edited by Guy S. Metraux and Francois Crouzet.

The New American Library, New York, 1965.

**SOUTHEAST ASIA IN TRANSITION** By B. R. Chatterji.

Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1965.

*The New Asia*, as Otto Klineberg in his introductory essay writes, is an Asia which has become or is increasingly becoming more like the West in its acceptance of the western values and institutions, ideas and practices, techniques and systems. This is the central theme of the remaining thirteen essays. They are concerned not so much with the prospects or future of this emerging Asia as with the factors and influences which have contributed to its growth, its 200 years history as a colony of the West.

The emphasis is, however, not on the bitter political past but how this era itself helped 'modernizing' the Asian society, in 'westernizing' it. The two terms—westernization and modernization—are in fact used as synonyms thus establishing a correlation between a geographic or cultural concept (the West) and a social process (modernization). This confusion could have been avoided had there been an enquiry to test the validity of this correlation itself. None of the contributors, however, seem to have felt the need for making any such enquiry.

An apology for this confusion is offered, ironically enough, by the two non-Asian editors, Metraux and Crouzet. They are embarrassed, even ashamed of Asia's westward march towards 'modernization'. And yet they are at pains to justify the 'Asian confusion' as 'purely a historical accident'—an accident highly rewarding for Asia since it introduced 'those elements which came to constitute modern society, i.e., new forms of political organization, new bases for economic activity, new social classes, new ways of life which removed traditional societies from the patterns that had been theirs for centuries'.

Otto Klineberg is the only contributor who raises some doubts to this glorious tale of everything being new and fresh. 'Are we so sure', he asks himself, 'of the values by which we live, of the social and political systems which we have created, as to wish them to become universal? Has their diffusion to Asia and Africa brought an improvement in the quality of living which we have the right to call Progress? Is what we have liked and found reasonably good for us inevitably good for them?' These are pertinent questions, but he avoids answering them since it would lead to 'moral and philosophical

issues beyond the scope of the present essay'. That may be so, but what about the book itself. Can the image of *New Asia* be complete without a knowledge of the moral and philosophical issues governing its shaping? Can its perspectives be visualised without examining the merits of these issues and their consequences? It is one thing to accept them unquestioningly and quite another to examine them rationally.

None of the thirteen essays which follow Klineberg's introductory note, *The New Asia, Short Cuts to Progress*, are however concerned with this aspect. They are simply historical surveys of some important events which occurred during the last 200 years in five regions of Asia: the North East, the Indian Sub-continent, Southeast Asia, the Far East, and North-eastern Siberia.

Each essay, being concerned with a particular country or a group of countries, none has any connection with the other except that nearly all of them are concerned with the impact of the West on the countries or regions under discussion. Judging from what most contributors have said, it appears that the general impact has been the same everywhere: a growing acceptance of the western ideas of progress and systems along with some attempts to preserve the national roots and some others to promote a hybrid culture, a synthesis of two cultures.

According to N. V. Sovani, for example, 'India absorbed most of the theoretical knowledge and philosophical ideas of the West but did not to that extent imbibe the techniques and know-how of the West'. (*British Impact on India*). Ravinder Kumar, also referring to India, speaks of the struggle for political emancipation as deriving its 'inspiration from the value system of Indian Civilization' and of the attempts by traditionalists to preserve this value system intact in opposition to those 'who sought to destroy the entire corpus of Hindu thought which they conceived to be in an incubus pressing down upon the masses'. (*Liberalism and Reforms in India*).

In the case of China, John K. Fairbank writes of the effort to retain 'Confucian values while utilizing Western tools, supporting China's traditional civilization while importing Western technology'. (*China's Response to the West*). Bernard Lewis in his essay states that in Turkey the first great movement of ideas from the West came through the French Revolution, but the message adopted was that of liberty, equality and *nationality* (rather than 'fraternity'), even equality was reinterpreted to mean equality between nations rather than individuals. (*The Impact of the French Revolution on Turkey*).

Msaaki Kosaka refers to many Japanese institutions as consisting of a mixture (although not always a synthesis) of elements from East and West; he refers also to 'Eastern Morale and Western Arts'. (*The Rebirth of Japan and the Impact of the West*). Philip K. Hitti raises this problem more explicitly in the case of Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, namely how to reconcile what should be retained from the

past 'with what is acceptable from the present'. (*The Impact of the West on Syria and Lebanon in the Nineteenth Century*).

This in short is the image of the *modern Asia*. The process of 'modernization' is still continuing. The earlier resistance to social and cultural change is gradually giving way to westernization of a hybrid type, neither wholly West nor wholly East. In all other fields westernization is more or less wholly adopted, only its speed is somewhat limited by such constraints as the time gap of early years, lack of material resources, and the like. The *Future Asia* will be no different except probably politically where it may grow more powerful depending on how united it remains or how weak the West itself becomes.

The second book, *Southeast Asia in Transition*, is concerned with this aspect of the Asian future. But it is too shoddy an attempt to merit serious reading. There is neither any coherence in its presentation nor any depth in its discussions. Widely varying articles ranging from 'Indian Traditions' to 'Prince Sihanouk's Views on Neutrality', from 'Historians of Southeast Asia' to 'Welfare State Concept', are included to give it a respectable size but not respectability or even readability. In all there are 28 such articles contributed by the students and teachers of the Indian School of International Studies. All are equally good or bad since none has really any purpose other than securing a place in the annal of printed publications. Most of them are in fact reprints from a journal whose readership comprises mainly the students and staff of the School itself. The remaining part is a collection of seminar talks and university or extension lectures delivered by the author, B. R. Chatterji. Nearly two-third's of the book is contributed by the latter and the rest by a group of five scholars.

#### Bookcritique

**INDIA'S QUEST FOR SECURITY** By Lorue J. Kavic.  
EBD Publishing & Distributing Co., Dehra Dun.

This historical treatment of India's defence policy since Independence is the outcome of painstaking research into published works, supplemented by personal interviews with select officers of the Defence Forces, active and retired. It seeks to give answers to a number of questions relating to the manner and motivations of India's defence policy formulation during and after Nehru's time.

The discussion on the relationship between civil and military branches of government inevitably brings into focus the Krishna Menon-Thimmayya episode. The author—albeit in a footnote—does not preclude the possibility of a military take-over in India at some time in the future. If it can happen in Pakistan, why not in India?—he seems to ask.

The factors that led to the Himalayan debacle in the conflict with China at the NEFA front are

analysed with illuminating hindsight, and with valuable lessons for the future of India's defence strategy. The relative importance of Pakistan and China in India's defence policy considerations is discussed at some length. Kavic does not hold that the Indo-Pakistan war was particularly decisive: India's policy of attrition in the Lahore-Sialkot Sector was a limited success; the Pakistan air force was qualitatively superior to the IAF; the Pakistan navy was intact; and there was no breakdown of Pakistani civilian or service morale. The author is critical of the performance of the Indian Navy which he attributes to the complacency of government and its failure to provide adequate budget allocations for that branch.

Is India's current conventional defence programme adequate? Doubts have been expressed on this particularly in view of the demand for development of nuclear weapons. The author recognises that, on the whole, India's present defence policy is more dynamic and is in striking contrast to her 'toothless' diplomacy of the past. In the shaping of her defence policy India is increasingly conscious of the larger role she has to play in South-east Asia in relation to Communist China rather than to the limited objective of defending herself against China and Pakistan.

Even so, he is of the opinion that the creation of a tactical nuclear force would be but of marginal use to India against the strategic superiority of China in this field in the Himalayan region. What is wanted is an Indian military plan that would take note of Chinese massive reserves of disciplined manpower and of India's resources position at once. He therefore concludes: 'A nuclear weapons programme now or in the immediate future would be a serious distortion of the country's needs. Strategy is always a choice between alternatives; and security can never be absolute; like many nations before her, India must learn to live with insecurity.'

**B. Natarajan**

#### **RURAL COMMUNES OF CHINA** By Gargi Dutt.

Asia Publishing House, 1967.

On rural communes in China, Mrs. Gargi Dutt has written a book of refreshing contrast to the propagandist stuff, both pro and anti Chinese, that is continuously put out by well established lobbies. Take, for instance, the uncritical and unscientific eulogising of peoples communes, coming surprisingly as it does from Mrs. Joan Robinson of Cambridge, who, as it happens, was once our uncritical admirer too, though now she has declared us as a hopeless case after pushing down our throats irrelevant theories of planning through her fancy pupils now well-entrenched in Indian universities and administration. There is also the other side. In our understandable, even inevitable, dislike of the Chinese Government, some of us fall prey to dismissing or ignoring as hostile everything Chinese. Mrs. Dutt

has avoided both these pitfalls, and her book is a solid piece of analysis supported by first-hand experience gained through her several years' stay in China.

Ever since the communists took over China in 1949, they have been experimenting with various types of land policy, though from mixed motives, attended both by successes and failures, successes surely if judged from the level of our performance, but colossal failures when judged from their own targets and objectives. There is a method in everything that the Chinese communists do. The method is broadly Stalinist, namely, one of learning by overdoing. The Chinese communist leaders always ended up in doing exactly what Stalin did, even when Stalin, dead or alive, was never around or accepted. Like Stalin, Mao has also not been able to reduce various lags, particularly the lags between enunciation of policy, organization and technology. Hence the contradictions and cruel methods to resolve them.

By July 1950, much of the country had already experienced land reforms before even the agrarian reform law of 1950 was promulgated. After several other experiments carried on with private and collective organizations of agriculture, some 97 per cent of China's rural population were forced into 750,000 collectives by March 1957. Hardly had the map for these collectives been drawn when Mao, the greater churner of the Chinese society, discarded them in favour of peoples communes. By the end of 1958, over 99 per cent of the peasant households were organized in these communes. It was just about that time that the official resolution in favour of the establishment of these communes was passed, though everybody had by then been drafted in. No society, however revolutionary and respected its leadership and whatever its economic compulsions, can easily adjust itself to such swift and fundamental changes without a respite or a period of consolidation granted to it. The crisis of the Chinese agriculture has always been the result of its impatient leaders trying to do too much in too short a time, attended by such ghastly consequences as the discarding of socialist legality, the elimination of elementary private activity, widespread using of force and punishment for non-conformism, etc. All this, however, was done in the garb of the spontaneous socialist upsurge.

Nonetheless, the idea of peoples communes was rooted in the very compulsions of the development of an over-populated, backward agriculture for which the State and the society could not afford to divert resources from the national programme for industrialization. Communes were to be a basic unit of State power much as they were to be basic economic units for planning, all the more so if the evils of communist bureaucratization were to be avoided.

In economic terms, communes were to be multi-purpose units for setting up agro-industrial complexes all over the country, as instruments for

creating larger economic surpluses (as much as 40 per cent of the produce was saved in some communes), for mobilization of vast human resources as substitutes for non-available and scarce capital resources, and for providing food and raw materials to those who were engaged in the programme for rapid industrialization in urban areas.

In political terms, the communes were to be the bastions of the party, the military and the government. Other advantages that were claimed for the communes were: a productive use of female labour power by setting it free from household work; regional planning in agriculture; elimination of differences between the rich and the poor and forestalling the growth of capitalist tendencies in villages; providing the regime with a potential of 30 million soldiers at short notice, etc.

Mrs. Dutt feels that there was no inevitability about the formation of the peoples communes and that this was not the only choice before the Chinese communists. Judged by the poor results and the hasty retreat that the Chinese Government had to beat on further intensification of the communes programmes may be cited as powerful defence in favour of that view. But the Chinese seem to have gone wrong sufficiently on all their major policies and one may equally agree against the inevitability of those policies too.

The fault it seems clearly now belongs to the impatience, paranoia and dictatorial methods of Mao and the inner-party struggle that left no time for anyone to evaluate rationally the accepted and adopted policies. Nobody can accuse the Chinese communist leaders of developing a rational outlook. History tells us that first generation communists are always impatient, irrational and cruel. It is to the Chinese people that one must give the credit of retrieving whatever has been retrieved so far. It is very difficult to see how the Chinese agriculture can be reorganized in any other way except by some mixture of communes and right of private activity on land, given a socialist or communist set-up.

Mrs. Dutt has given in the last two chapters of the book a valuable account of the tortuous groping for a new policy on communes, which unfortunately, thanks again to Mao, has been swamped by the cultural revolution. One has to await the completion of this revolution for some time more before any final judgement can be pronounced on the communes, which for the Chinese communists, still remain their most original and only constructive contribution to the theory and practice of communism.

J. D. Sethi

**AUTHORS TAKE SIDES ON VIETNAM** Edited by Cecil Woolf and John Bagguley.

Peter Owen, London, 1967.

A few days ago, the well-known French film

maker, Louis Malle, was telling us about the film 'Far from Viet Nam'—a film with such names as Goddard, Resnais, etc. Malle feels quite intensely about Viet Nam but as he said, 'I am not interested in the problem of French intellectuals about Viet Nam'. One's first reaction about this book is somewhat similar: what is the point of such a book? Particularly as the book takes its idea from a similar effort in the thirties about Spain. But, for anybody who has the time, *Authors Take Sides on Viet Nam* is an interesting exercise in the qualitative difference between the thinking of the thirties and the present day.

Then there was much hope, whole worlds of passion that looked towards the future: man had not quite succumbed to the emotional paralysis which prevails today. The majority of the authors here, in this book, merely express their total helplessness—the irrelevance of their views, their inability to act and, finally, the comfortable and rather cynical withdrawal into the quasi-transcendental, esoteric stance of individual alienation from any need to take sides. 'Of course, we despair at the American intervention but does my opinion really matter'—this roughly sums up the position of the majority, even when they do decide to take sides. There are a few who do come through with a very clear indication of choice. Kingsley Amis, for example. He is convinced that the Americans are carrying the white man's burden: indeed, saving the future of man from communism. On the opposite side, there are views like that of Peter Fryer who clearly spells out in a forthright manner that the only real solution is for the Viet Cong to win.

There are not many contributions which reflect much intensity of writing: after all, if words are the only mice that these ponderous mountains are to produce, let us at least be overwhelmed by the authorly quality of the contributions. This is rather rare. Harold Pinter's 'The Americans should not have gone in, but they did. They should now get out, but they won't,' is typical of his style, although rather predictably so. George Barker's 'Goddammit every US bomb dropped on Hanoi canstitoots a triumph of the American Way of Life. For Chrissakes, whaddya want us to drop? Billy Graham, humour seems to express the poignant anguish which probably represents the feelings of the majority of the intellectuals everywhere. Each contribution is of course significant as an exposé of what the individual author feels—even when someone is trying to hide his feelings—and with such a wide impressive conglomeration of names (including our very own, the inevitable Mulk Raj) it is as they say in book review parlance, a must for every student of literature.

In the meanwhile, the war goes on in Viet Nam, little boys and girls give their lives and one day surely this will stop wars forever.

S. P. Chowdhury

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# The problem

IN an economy like that of India, a long term plan extending over 5 or 10 years is the main instrument for accelerating economic and social development. On the basis of careful analysis of the problems facing the country and the potentialities of mobilising and developing its resources of men and material, the plan sets out consistent and 'ambitious' (but feasible) targets, signifying the principal tasks to be carried out in the public and private sectors. It also spells out the broad guide lines of economic policy implied in the programme of planned investment. The formal adoption of a long term national plan gives direction and purpose to the national effort of reconstruction, creates coherence, reduces uncertainties, and engenders hope. In a mixed economy, planning can be an indispensable complement to the operation of the market; by overcoming some of the major deficiencies of the market mechanism through purposive intervention by the government, the way can be cleared for speedier growth of the economy.

But a long term plan, however competently drawn up initially, which seeks to forecast the future course of development and aims to ensure balance and coordination at every stage as the economy moves forward, cannot be rigid; it must retain a measure of flexibility.

In any real situation the plan will need frequent modification and adaptation to suit changing conditions. It is through the device of annual plans and annual budgets of the Centre and the States that the required operational adjustments are sought to be made. The annual plan exercise is not just a miniature version of five-year plan formulation. Along with the government budgets for the year, the annual plan should be considered as providing an occasion for the Planning Commission, the Ministry of Finance and the government to review the performance of the economy closely during the year just ended, and to assess the problems and prospects for the ensuing year in regard to the demands on the economy and the economy's capacity to meet these demands.

The fifteen-year or ten-year plan, or even a five-year plan, is primarily concerned with offering a lasting solution to the problems of the economy basically through capital formation—raising the rate and determining the pattern of investment. It is concerned with shaping policies for achieving demographic balance at lower levels of fertility and mortality rates, which requires sustained effort; long term policies in education and training to avoid shortages of various skills in future; natural resource development which requires extensive

surveys, investigation and research; promotion of scientific research, development of infrastructure; growth of agriculture; expansion of exports; basic import substitution. In general it seeks the structural transformation of the economy to ensure self-reliant growth, such that a satisfactory rate of development can be continued indefinitely, and the basic objectives of the society in regard to rising living standards, assuring minimum level of living, greater opportunities and lessening of inequalities, are progressively realized.

In the annual plan most of the elements of the situation are largely given. The capacities and production potentials are known; and there are judgments possible regarding imports, exports and foreign aid availability as the usable part of the latter will be already in the pipeline or very nearly so. Even in regard to investment programmes, much the greater part will have already been committed and all that would be necessary is to secure the necessary finance for the properly phased execution of the projects. For the few new starts which will be required, the long term plan will provide the guidance so that investments meant for removing capacity bottlenecks of the future are identified in proper time, given priority according to their importance in the strategy, and action initiated taking the necessary time lags into account.

The annual plan and budget exercise are not only concerned with plan investments and their non-inflationary financing during the year but also with the efficient management of the economy during the year in all its relevant aspects. The existence of an explicit, fairly detailed frame-work of the economy relating to the preceding year and the ensuing year is a great help in analysing the nature of the problem because of the many inter-connections which have to be taken into account. The need for such frame-work is conceded, but its preparation and use for policy purposes can be regarded for the present in India as of very recent origin and as mainly a challenge to be met in the future. In the meanwhile unarticulated and often uncoordinated assumptions and some fuzzy frame-work hold the field and provide the inspiration for policy. In simple situations calling for political and administrative action, this approach may be workable. In the formulation of economic policy this style and manner is not only inadequate but full of danger.

A typical annual plan-budget has to concern itself with many specific problems, as, for example, the management of public sector enterprises—their production goals for the year, the targets of profit, the state of their order books; the promotion of exports; arrangements regarding foreign exchange; the detailed

coordination of measures relating to agricultural development; the coordination and synchronization of requirement of machinery by project authorities and their supply by the machinery manufacturing units, and so on. The formulation of these tasks is only inadequately attempted at present. And no explicit analysis is made of the projected course of the economy in the budget year in terms of current output, current incomes, savings, investment, balance of payments, prices, etc.

The economic task in a given year is an amalgam of two elements:

- (a) steering of the economy in order to maximise production with greater efficiency of performance up to the limit of capabilities estimated to have been already established;
- (b) to ensure continuity of development through the annual plan which forms part of a long term plan.

The investment programme of the year is directly connected with the second aspect, but the various policy measures of government, including fiscal and monetary policies, price policies, credit policies, the management of foreign exchange and institutional and organisational improvements have to be related to the broader needs of the economy as comprised in the first aspect.

The economic task for the annual plan-budget (1968-69) could be formulated as that of maximising production in agriculture and industry on the basis of capabilities already created, subject to the following conditions:

- (1) requirements of financial stability;
- (2) balance of payments, after taking into account availability and utilization of aid;
- (3) continuity of plan investments in hand, and provision of finance according to the needs of projects at their particular stage of execution;
- (4) new starts from amongst schemes already well worked out to avoid future supply bottlenecks due to capacity deficiencies;
- (5) a certain minimum expansion under essential social services such as education and health, which have suffered considerable neglect during the past two years.

As the various aspects of the problem are inter-related, it is useful to prepare a fairly detailed economic model showing the functioning of the economy in its various related aspects, and so framed as to bring out an identification of policy instruments and measures in their inter-relationship with production

in agriculture and industry, imports and exports, consumption, savings and investment and taxation.

The most essential task is to assemble and collate statistical data relevant to such analysis. It is necessary to have well developed statistical data series extending over a long period, and improve the knowledge of the behaviour of the economy and of the relationships among different parts. High quality research work undertaken by independent research centres, who are given full access to raw material as it comes to the official forecasters, must be encouraged to improve methods. There is vast room for improvement.

As an illustration, some exercises in connection with the annual plan and budget of 1968-69 in India appear to have attempted organisation of data and analysis on the following lines.

- (1) Potential and prospects of agricultural production in 1967-68 and 1968-69.
- (2) Potential for production in industry for 1967-68 and 1968-69, spelt out in detail in regard to production of various consumer goods, capital goods and intermediate goods required for producing basically consumer goods or capital goods.
- (3) Demand and supply balances in regard to agricultural commodities and manufactured goods in appropriate markets. Data on income and price elasticities, for consumer goods and technical coefficients for intermediate products are necessary for such analysis.
- (4) Balance of payments. Assessment of imports, exports, aid utilization and project aid in pipeline, debt servicing, etc., in the current year and the ensuing year.
- (5) Estimates of national income by detailed categories for the current year and the ensuing year, by industrial origin, and disposition of gross national product by final uses.
- (6) Input-Output analysis to reveal crucial inter-relationships for the past year, the current year and the ensuing year in line with other facts and assumptions.
- (7) Estimated demand worked out in relation to the growth of per capita income, investment and population in the ensuing year, and a re-check of demand and supply balances as indicated in (3). In view of apprehensions regarding inflationary pressures, this analysis to be particularly concerned with supply and demand position

regarding selected essential commodities of mass consumption, such as foodgrains, cloth, oil, sugar, etc., whose prices may have to be kept stable.

- (8) Analysis of financial position in the dynamic setting of the economy and measures to make policies regarding financial mobilisation to accord with the economic tasks. (This is in contrast with the approach sometimes followed, in which the plan and the economic task become subservient to finance about which views are independently taken based on the exigencies of the situation). This requires a close and competent analysis of the effects of various policies on prices, efficiency of production, income distribution, etc. Study of taxation and the role of budgetary deficit has to be investigated, in several alternative formulations, in relation to the financial task and the likely effects on the economy.
- (9) The results of analysis to bring out the losses and gains, short term and long term, of taking certain measures or not taking them, to provide a basis for final choice.
- (10) Finally, there is the question of uncertainties. No plan can be formulated with a guarantee that all its assumptions will come true. There are many sources of uncertainties even during the annual plan period—such as monsoon, foreign aid, exports and political instability. Some protection against vagaries can no doubt be built into the plan itself, through buffer stocks, foreign exchange reserves, cautious expenditure policy, but all these entail a price. What view to take? Where should the balance be struck?

This is, of course, an all too brief and over simplified statement of the problem. It merely attempts to bring some important issues to focus.

To conclude, the long term plan is vital for giving direction and purpose, continuity and coherence to national effort. But the long term growth of the economy is better ensured if the short term management of the economy continues to be good. This calls for systematic integration of the annual plan with the budget, backed by more sophisticated analysis based on accurate and comprehensive data. But the plea, sometimes made, that a more sophisticated annual plan is the new broom which should sweep away the cobweb of long term plans, only betrays ignorance and over-enthusiasm, as is all too clear to see.

# Public sector neglected

A. M. KHUSRO

FOR economies which are interested not merely in stability but also in growth with equilibrium, a budget without a plan is almost as meaningless as a plan without a budget. When Morarji Desai presented his budget last year, he was in a tight corner. The fourth plan was in the doldrums then as it is now, but unlike now, additional resources were not in sight.

Prices were rising steeply and co-existed with recession partly of demand (as in the engineering and capital goods making industries) but largely of supplies (as in the agro-based industries like cotton textiles, jute manufacture and edible oils). The breaking of the bottlenecks of supply and demand required selective investment, which is the essence of a plan, but

the lack of resources kept Morarji Desai from additional taxation while anti-inflationary considerations prevented deficit financing of any substantial order. It was a wait-and-see budget and Desai waited and saw.

### Radical Change

This year the situation has changed radically and of course for the better. But when the Finance Minister went to Parliament to present his budget there was no plan but only the memories of some half-baked or half-conceived projects in the abortive Draft Outline of the fourth plan. No wonder that sights were lowered and the budget did not show enough pep so far as the public sector operation is concerned.

A budget is always in relation to the economic environment expected to prevail over the financial year. The environment of today is that factory capacity remains idle by a large margin, the annual rate of export earnings is still very low and resources in general have not yet begun to increase rapidly. But the kharif crop of 1967 has already confirmed that the agricultural year ending 30th June 1968 will bring, say, 95 million tons of foodgrains. This is an upward jump of 19 million tons or 25 per cent over the last year and such a sharp increase has hardly ever occurred during the era of planning except in 1953-54 and to a smaller extent in 1964-65. Since agricultural raw materials emerge from the same source and under the same conditions as foodgrains, it is not a wild guess that raw material supply will rise by at least 15 per cent.

As this additional raw material gets embodied in industrial production, it is fair to expect a substantial, once-for-all jump of at least 10 per cent in industrial output. This is so because of: (i) the low base from which we start, (ii) the existence of large unutilized capacity, (iii) the availability of

labour which has not been laid off substantially during the recession, and because (iv) the Indian manufacturing industry in normal times has already shown a 7 to 8 per cent increase per annum in the past. For these reasons it is fair to expect something like a 15 per cent rise in India's real national income this year, but the budget proceeds on the assumption of something like an 11 per cent increase. That is, to say, resources have been under-estimated and to that extent expenditures in the public sector have been targeted unduly low. In other words, the additional programmes that could have been taken up this year have not been taken up both because of the under-estimation of available resources and the non-existence of full-fledged plans.

### Private Sector

The Finance Minister seems to have had two clear objectives among some others. One was to give undiluted relief to the private manufacturing and trading sector and the capital market, and the other to cushion the consumer who has had a very raw deal for years on end owing to the rapid march of inflation and the resulting holes in his pocket. Both, it would seem, are laudable ends and, I think, Morarji Desai has succeeded eminently in providing relief to both groups. The dividend tax on excess dividends is to go, the surtax on corporate profits is to be reduced by 10 per cent, companies engaging themselves in agricultural operations are to benefit and there are some other concessions, particularly to exports.

Taken together with two other big occurrences, (i) the prospect of a very good and inexpensive raw material supply in nearly all the agro-based industries, and (ii) the decrease in bank rate and the whole structure of interest rates, industry is likely to recover its lost ground and reformulate brighter expectations. While the capital market has shown definite signs of recovery, there is still a great deal

of hesitation, for, industrialists and others have got so afflicted with pessimism that they will see the good times only when good times force themselves upon them. As manufacturing capacity gets more fully utilized and the rate of return on factory capital increases, expectations will be revised upwards. A great deal of diversion of investible funds into land, gold, commodity holdings and other such assets is likely to stop as profits in industry rise and those from the assets mentioned just now decline relatively. That speculation in commodity stocks is no longer a paying proposition and that land and gold price appreciation is no longer what it used to be, are added reasons for expecting a shift in favour of the capital market.

Moreover, in the past few years, owing to shortages, controls and the existence of black-markets in a wide range of goods, undeclared earnings used to emerge which were afraid to go into the capital market for fear of being detected and therefore took refuge in land, gold and commodity markets. Now, with a relative abundance in the economy compared to demand, the black-markets are bound to be less buoyant and undeclared earnings relatively small, so that on the one hand, tax evasion may be somewhat smaller and, on the other, the diversion of savings into non-growth-promoting assets smaller too. The growing gains will be felt both in the governments' exchequers and in the capital market. With a lowering of food prices if wage rates could be prevented from rising, except where a correlation is overdue, industry will reach a manageable cost structure and will certainly catch up with the times.

Thus, all seems to be well so far as the private producing sector goes.

### Consumer Relief

As for consumers, a period of unabated relief is in sight, not so



much because taxes and other dues have actually been reduced, but because prices are falling. The Annuity Deposit Scheme is abolished. Morarji Desai has also been able to create an impression of some semblance of equity by raising the rates of income-tax in higher income brackets above Rs. 1 lakh and the rate of wealth tax above Rs. 10 lakhs. The duty on such luxury items as whisky and brandy has been stepped-up and the excises on the rich man's goods like refrigerators, air-conditioners, steel furniture and leather cloth, the rich women's goods like embroidery and the rich children's goods like chocolates and confectionary have been stepped up. The only items which seem to harm the lower income groups are post and telegraph rates and the price of unmanufactured tobacco which, of course, claims a very small proportion of the common man's budget.

### The Plan

It would appear from the analysis so far that while the present budget boosts up the consumer, the private producer and the trader, it does not do enough for the public sector or for the plan. This impression must now be subjected to detailed scrutiny. If Morarji Desai had for good reasons decided to cushion the consumer this year and increased taxation (net of annuity deposit payments, provident fund and payment to States) by no more than Rs. 26 crores, few would grudge him that decision, provided that as a consequence of it he did not lower the volumes of public borrowing and deficit financing, that is the volume of public expenditure so low as to jeopardize the possibility of the economy emerging rapidly from the recession and resuming its course on the growth path.

It is well-known from administrative experience as also from

research studies that the Indian tax system does not have enough sensitivity to changes in incomes or expenditures. A 1 per cent rise in national income does not generally lead to a 1 per cent rise in tax collection. Tax revenues are sluggish for various reasons—black earnings go untaxed, exemption limits are often too high, avoidance is easily possible, the increase in the level of activity does not get fully recorded, and so on. There are also some political factors, in particular on the agricultural front, such as land revenue concessions, that work in the same direction. It is certain that a big jump in real resources of agriculture and industry over a 12-month horizon is not going to be adequately represented in the increase of tax receipts, whatever a Finance Minister may do in a single budget. Thus, the resources unmopped by the budget are going to remain with the private producing and consuming units and a fair proportion of these new resources are going to be consumed away rather than be saved and directed into investment.

### Role of Government

The role of the government under these circumstances precisely is to curb consumption in the sense of allowing it to rise by no more than a planned rate, mop up the resources and divert them towards constructive investment activity. It is here that the role of a well-conceived plan as well as the role of additional taxation, borrowing and deficit financing becomes crucial. New taxation, borrowing and deficit financing must play upon these idle resources. While the additional resources this year will run into at least Rs. 2,000 crores at current prices (at least 10 per cent of a national income of more than Rs. 20,000 crores), additional net taxation this year stands only at Rs. 26 crores. If so little out of so much is to be mopped up, how come that net borrowing from the public is only Rs. 56 crores and deficit financing

no more at Rs. 290 crores? The sights are indeed very low.

If agriculture could not be taxed directly, it was most essential to tax it indirectly through excises. In particular, the items of farm consumption and farm production which are generally in short supply and in which there is a black-market—fertilizers, pesticides, tractors, implements—were fit subjects for indirect taxation. When black-markets exist, neither the manufacturers nor the government gets the benefit of the high prices paid by buyers and received by tradesmen. If increases in controlled prices are combined with elimination of subsidies and increases in taxes, the gains can be shared by the government and the manufacturers. The Finance Minister, however, has chosen not to take advantage of this situation.

### Deficit Financing

Let us now examine the assertion about deficit financing being too small. During the last financial year, when production and resources were so very limited, the country ended up with an actual deficit in the government's budget of about Rs. 300 crores. This, however, did not lead to any major rise in the price level. The index number of wholesale prices (1952-53=100) stood approximately at the same figure (208) at the presentation of the last budget as at this. In fact, during the last 6 months of the financial year 1967-68, the wholesale price index declined from 220 to 208. How then should one reconcile oneself to the fact that in a year of vastly increased resources—perhaps by some 12 to 15 per cent—the figure of deficit financing, at Rs. 290 crores, is kept as low as last year's figure, when resources were so meagre. It seems that if ever there was a time to undertake a large dose of deficit finance without any serious fear of price inflation, it was the year 1968-69.

An analysis of this year's expected increase in grain production further confirms this. In a

comparable situation in 1964-65, when grain production jumped up by about 10 million tons, indications are that the whole quantity went into stock building by traders and farmers, since consumer prices did not fall. If additional foodgrains this year are going to be 19 million tons, assuming that as much as 12 million tons goes into stock re-building by farmers and traders—about 7 million tons are going to be available additionally.

#### Buffer Stocks

Assuming now that a buffer stock building of 4 million tons is undertaken, 3 million tons are still going to be available to the consumer market. Since prices will then be lower this year than last, it is certain that consumption demand will be larger. How much larger it is going to be depends upon how low the grain prices are allowed to fall. In the absence of large buffer stocks, all the additional tonnage can be eaten away within a year or two leaving the country high and dry in the future. This is where deficit financing and buffer stocks come in. To avoid waste and conserve stocks, either the buffers have to be larger than 4 million tons or deficit spending on investment projects has to be larger, or both.

On top of the 3 million tons that are clearly going to be surplus even after a 4 million ton buffer stock, there are the foodgrains imports to be reckoned with. Better that these imports be reduced sharply and confined only to buffer stock construction. But one suspects that for reasons connected with budgetary receipts from PL 480 grain arrival, substantial imports will stream in. Prices are already falling, the rabi crop is about to go into the market, storage facilities are limited and arrival of more imports augurs a further decline in prices. Under these circumstances, there should have been no difficulty at all, in fact, a great compulsion to increase the amount of deficit finance, especially when other laud-

able objectives of the economy are waiting to be achieved.

#### Bolder Approach

The initial requirements of a 5 million ton buffer stock programme including warehouse construction, grain purchase, etc., are perhaps in the region of Rs. 500 crores. It is true that the whole of it could not have been provided through the budget in a single year, or from home resources alone. But Morarji Desai provides a rather limited amount of Rs. 140 crores towards buffer stock building. It ought to be realised that there is a difference between spending a given amount on buffer stocks and the same amount on other items which would be more inflationary in character through its multiplier effects. When this amount is used for building stocks, while the multiplier effects are the same as in any other case, there is the simultaneous setting-up of a mechanism which is intended for price stabilization. One would have therefore expected a greater deficit financing, if only to provide for a larger buffer stock programme.

It has also to be remembered that in the absence of very large grain purchases by the government this year if prices decline seriously, incentives to the farmers to produce in the years to come will be seriously diminished and the well-known cobweb phenomenon will operate.

It has been estimated that an additional investment of Rs. 100 crores requires on the average half a million ton of foodgrain availability. Considering what the net additions to the availabilities are going to be this year—anywhere between 5 to 8 million tons net of public buffer stocks and private inventory re-building—deficit financing of Rs. 500 crores just for once this year would not have harmed anybody. In fact, it would have put the economy back on the path of growth, broken many a supply bottleneck at strategic points and pulled the economy out of the recession faster than is now going to happen.

# Small savings

I. S. GULATI

IN his 1968-69 budget speech, the Finance Minister referred to the inadequacy of domestic savings as one among the principal difficulties that 'had combined to create a feeling of despondency which has afflicted us in the recent past'. It is believed that the overall rate of domestic saving which had reached

11 per cent in 1963-64 has declined to less than 8 per cent currently.

A major problem which the authors of the new fourth plan beginning from 1969-70 would have to face is to restore, within as short a time as possible, the rate of domestic saving which the

country had already reached. It is in this context that the budget for 1968-69 could have played an important advance-guard role. With the expected sharp increase in agricultural incomes and accompanying modest increase in industrial incomes, it is immediately necessary that as high a proportion as possible of the current increases in incomes, agricultural and industrial, is saved rather than consumed.

It was only appropriate that the Finance Minister emphasised the urgent need for mobilising 'savings of all classes' and particularly underlined the role of the small savings movement in this matter. Taking note of the fact that net small savings too had been 'relatively low in the recent past in consequence of the droughts', the Finance Minister announced that he was making a number of modifications in the small saving schemes and expressed the hope that 'with a renewed drive for collection, particularly in the rural areas, these measures should help in greater mobilisation of resources.'

### Orientation

It is not my intention to indulge here in a speculative exercise on whether with the help of the changes announced for the new year and 'renewed drive for collection', it will be possible to raise a larger amount of small savings this year than in the year just ended. Instead, I wish to raise a more basic, and also immediately more important, question with respect to the small savings movement obtaining in our country. Whom does the small savings movement really address itself to? To anticipate our conclusions, the movement addresses itself not to the persons with small incomes whether in agriculture or outside of it, but to the rich non-agriculturists. This being so, the role that the movement can, in our opinion, play is a very limited one of merely transferring savings from one sector to another.

Let me explain first the reason why I consider this question to be

of immediate importance. As has been clearly shown by the recent modest price fall of kharif crops, the major part of the increase in agricultural incomes in consequence of the spurt in agricultural production is most likely going to be retained in the agricultural sector. No doubt, the industrial sector and, consequently, the tertiary sector as well, are expected to pick up during the new fiscal year. Therefore, there should take place increases in non-agricultural incomes as well. But the bulk of the increase is sure to be in agricultural incomes. Any scheme which seeks to siphon off a substantial portion of the expected increase in national income this year to saving has little chance of success unless it is directed principally to the agriculturists. The Finance Minister was evidently not unaware of this, for, as is borne out by his budget speech, it is his intention to direct the renewed drive for small savings to the rural sector in particular. But then the questions which immediately come to one's mind are: is the present small savings movement really oriented towards the agriculturist? Are the principal attractions which the various small saving schemes have to offer addressed to the agriculturist?

### Concessions

As for the basic relevance of the question, it derives from the doubts which arise from the manner in which the various attractions are offered in the form of tax concessions. Almost all small saving schemes carry, for instance, exemption from income tax on the interest income accruing under the schemes. Some of the schemes like the Cumulative Time Deposit Scheme, carry an additional tax concession. Monthly deposits made under this particular scheme for a 10-or-15-year period are eligible for deduction from current income chargeable to tax in the same manner as a contribution to Provident Fund or a Life Insurance premium. Also, moneys held under these various schemes enjoy exemption from wealth tax.

No doubt, income tax becomes payable once an individual's

income exceeds Rs. 4,000 and, therefore, any saving held by an individual earning more than Rs. 4,000 under one or the other of small saving schemes carries the corresponding tax concession. But the benefit arising from these tax concessions vary from individual to individual depending upon the level of income. The tax concessions referred to above do not mean the same thing to an individual whose income is Rs. 4,800 a year as it would to another whose income is Rs. 48,000 a year. A cumulative time deposit of Rs. 120 made by an individual with an annual income of Rs. 4,800 would mean an immediate saving to him of Rs. 3.86 (i.e., of 3.3% of deposit). The corresponding saving to the individual with an income of Rs. 48,000 on a deposit of Rs. 1,200 would be Rs. 396 (i.e., 33.3% of deposit) and to the individual earning Rs. 96,000 a year it would work out as Rs. 1,030 on a deposit of Rs. 2,400 (i.e., 43%). Where, however, an individual's income is only Rs. 3,800 (i.e., below the exemption limit), he enjoys no immediate saving.

### Exemption

Now let us see what the exemption of interest income from income tax means to different individuals. As the table below clearly demonstrates, to persons with income exempt from income tax or chargeable to low rates of income tax at the margin, the gain from tax exemption is more than off-set by the loss involved in low rates of interest which the small saving deposits offer as compared to those offered by commercial banks. It is only to persons chargeable to tax at very high rates that the gain can be enormous, particularly when one combines the gain from income tax exemption on interest income with the initial saving one makes under certain schemes where deposits made thereunder are allowed to be deducted from income chargeable to income tax. For instance, the combined gain in terms of net interest income only will be 32 per cent of the net interest income which would accrue on a deposit with a commercial bank for a

**TABLE: Comparative Net Yields on an Investment of Rs. 100**

	Interest on fixed deposit with a commercial bank	Income tax payable	Net interest income (2-3)	Interest on new 5-year Saving Deposit	Gain in income from investment in Saving Deposit (5-4)	Gain as percentage of net interest income from fixed deposit with a commercial bank
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Income level						
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	%
3,800	6.50	NIL	6.50	4.50	-2.00	- 31
4,800	6.50	0.36	6.14	4.50	-1.64	- 27
24,000	6.50	2.05	4.45	4.50	+0.05	+ 1
48,000	6.50	3.58	2.92	4.50	+1.58	+ 54
96,000	6.50	4.54	1.96	4.50	+2.54	+128
1,92,000	6.50	5.00	1.50	4.50	+3.00	+200

person with the annual income of Rs. 1,92,000.

In the circumstances, can it be seriously claimed that the small savings movement is addressing itself to persons with small incomes? No doubt, each scheme has a certain ceiling prescribed beyond which one's deposit cannot go or beyond which one is not entitled to tax concession but the fact remains that even a rupee allowed to be saved under any of the so called small saving schemes means a lot more to persons chargeable to income tax at higher rates than to those liable to a low rate or to those not liable to income tax altogether. Agriculturists with small non-agricultural incomes fall into either of the latter two categories regardless of whether their agricultural incomes are large or small.

It is clear that the principal attractions of the small saving schemes are not addressed to either the agriculturists or small non-agriculturists. The small savings movement addresses itself to only non-agriculturists of higher incomes. That being so, the movement cannot do more than merely 'mobilise' (using the word in the narrow literal sense) savings from the household sector to

the government sector, for, after all, persons in higher income brackets need little incentive to save. They save already. The attractions offered under the various small saving schemes would only tempt them to transfer saving from one form to another.

Thus, we are constrained to conclude that even though the Finance Minister might have genuinely wanted, like the whole line of his predecessors in office including himself, to raise the level of household saving through the small savings movement, it is unlikely that he would succeed in more than just mobilising the existing saving from the household sector to the governmental sector. In this respect, then, the 1968-69 Budget is unlikely to prepare the ground for the fourth plan because it fails to recognise the urgency of a radical departure from the past in the whole orientation of the small savings movement.

If a small savings movement has to play a creative role in the generation of household saving, as it should, it must address itself principally to the categories of income earners, agriculturists and small-income non-agriculturists, which it virtually ignores today.

# An adult's primer

ASHOK V. DESAI

OURS is a many-faced and many-phased economy. At one time it used to be an economy of peaceful coexistence. Then it became an economy of social gain. For a time it changed into an economy of peasants and soldiers. Now, with a bumper harvest and a million-strong army it is again time for the economy to change colours. I have heard it said that it had become an economy of peace and progress. But perhaps it has already changed into an economy of pragmatism.

It is all very hectic and complex, and an economist would consider himself lucky in the circumstances if he were only two years behind the times. But rather than play this losing game of chasing events, some economists believe in evolving or adopting an eternally true image of the economy and worshipping her through thick and thin. I belong to this happy genre.

I believe in an Economy of Love; and I would suggest that all

phenomena in our economy can be explained in terms of the Economy of Love. This will be quite clear once I state my assumptions.

The Head of the Economy of Love is Father Love who masquerades in real life as the government. He has many daughters, variously called Ministries, Institutes, Steel Plants, etc. He operates a bank account together with his daughters, from which each of them can withdraw money at will.

The daughters are a very loving lot; they are always entertaining innumerable lovers at considerable expense. Thus, the set-up is perfectly designed to ensure Father Love's bankruptcy. To avoid this drastic eventuality, the family has worked out an arrangement whereby, at the beginning of every year, it agrees on the year's allowance to the daughters for their activities. The statement of promises by Father Love to the daughters is called the budget. The arrangement causes certain problems; for instance, the more

profligate daughters go on a binge as soon as their budget is passed, and pass the later days of the year in great want, whereas the economical ones are very temperate in love until they find at the end of the year that they have a large balance they could spend, and go on a mad loving spree. But these problems are minor compared to the bedlam that would result if the daughters had a free rein.

#### Taxation

The arrangement, works quite well while the daughters are young and inexperienced; but soon their appetites grow, their commitments multiply, and with the best of wills it is no longer possible for Father Love to balance accounts. Being a powerful man, he imposes a tax on all acts of love; the beauty of the tax is that the daughters and their lovers are also subject to it, and a substantial proportion of Father Love's allowances to his daughters returns to him. As time goes, Father Love exercises his ingenuity and levies different rates of duty on different kinds of acts of love. He even introduces a personal tax based on the frequency of taxpayers' acts of love. The proliferation of taxes leads to much concealment of love, and the love tax officers adopt many ingenious methods of detection, such as untimely raids, spies on trees etc. In spite of their vigilance, many acts of love naturally go undetected; but it does not worry Father Love. The more are concealed, the further he raises taxes.

Things go merrily on until lovers grow restive with the burden of taxation; even the daughters begin to lament that at the existing rates of taxation it is just not worth while for their lovers to love them. Father Love is at the end of the tether. In despair he turns to economists. Finally, one of the Keynesians gives him the aphorism that opens his eyes—'Expenditure generates love'. Father Love, whose bitter experience

tells him that love generates expenditure, cannot believe his ears. But he finally sees the point. He buys up the bank and starts giving the daughters more money than he is earning. This deficit finance soon leads to a massive blooming of love; everybody has a lover, everybody is fully absorbed in his pursuit, and peace and prosperity reign in the economy of love.

Jubilant at the wonders of deficit finance, Father Love primes the pump a bit too much. The economy gets overheated. An acute shortage of lovers develops. Lovers are to be seen lying limply in the shade, utterly exhausted; and finally, unable to cope with their overwhelming tasks, lovers begin to raise their charges. The inflation of charges raises Father Love's revenue, but it also raises the daughters' demands, and Father Love knows no peace. Nor does anyone else.

Sadly, Father Love calls back the economists, and tells them to get him out of the mess where they have landed him. They tell him that he has solved the problem of inadequate expenditure, and created the problem of inadequate lovers. The lovers of his economy are primitive and cannot meet the demands made on them. Their capacity for love has to be increased. To this end they suggest investment in pavilions in the middle of lakes.

#### Father Turned Banker

Poor Father Love, who is a mere father turned banker, spends all he has on lakes and pavilions; and what he gets for the money looks more like swampy hovels. The lovers fall sick and begin to die. In desperation, Father Love turns to foreign friends for money and advice. They are very sympathetic and helpful. The Russians build him magnificent lake pavilions; the Americans send him nutritious food for his lovers, and also a great many erotic experts. Their psychologists come and investigate the lover's motivation, declare that it is unsatisfactory, and suggest that special songs should be taught in schools exhorting people to love. Their sociolo-

gists discover that the joint family system inhibits people's erotic impulses, and recommend its abolition. Bewildered by the plethora of advice, Father Love makes up a statement of the recommendations that he could carry through in the next five years with the money he could manage to keep out of his daughters' hands. To reassure himself he calls this statement the Five-year Plan. But, however much he fiddles the accounts, the picture five years ahead looks grim. So he also prepares a statement of intentions that could be financed in the following twenty five years, and calls it the Perspective Plan. It makes him feel good.

And then? It is very sad, but however much I fiddle the assumptions, I get the same answer—Father Love folds up before the end of the Perspective Plan. For poor Father Love is a father turned banker, and with all the experts' help, he just cannot learn about love.

#### Paucity of Knowledge

Are we as ignorant about economic development as Father Love about love? Very nearly. If we leave aside technical knowledge (e.g. that the production of ammonia requires 840 to 900 cubic metres of natural gas) and restrict ourselves to what actually happens in economies (and thereby exclude deductions about what would happen to economies if they were, in certain respects, not what they are), the inventory of our knowledge would be puny.

However, by force of habit an economist might make an assumption: that he was asked on the pain of death to stimulate the economic development of a country. It is difficult to see where he might make his last stand; what is delineated here is just one possible piece of promising terrain.

He might notice that the countries which have increased their incomes and output fastest are also those which have increased their exports fastest. So maybe exporting would stimulate production. Now, what do exports depend on? As an economist he would imme-

diately think of prices. But when he compares price movements, he finds to his surprise that neither the general price level nor export prices are related to the growth rate of countries.

### Production

Chastened, he goes back to production. Maybe it is the surplus production at home that must be exported. It is tautological that the productive capacity of faster-growing countries must have risen—that the rate of investment must be high. But what about labour? Has employment also risen fast? It has risen; but the rise is not so striking as the rise in production. While the fast-growing countries have expanded their working force, they have not necessarily done so faster than the slow ones.

Whence it follows that the productivity of labour rises particularly fast where production does. Now perhaps the economist is getting somewhere; maybe it all runs as follows. Where labour productivity rises, it raises the profits of enterprises. They then re-invest the profits if they cannot meet the demand with their capacity; if it is demand they want, they lower prices.

Now, what makes labour productivity grow? Here the economist is in the soup. He remembers from the business cycle literature that productivity grows faster in recovery, when industries have surplus capacity and face growing demand, than during a slump or a boom. He also knows about economies of scale, and about higher productivity in larger organisations.

This advantage of large scale is not confined to labour productivity; it extends to capital requirements, which increase less than in proportion to output. In fact, engineers, who are often as ignorant as economists, make a blanket assumption that capital costs rise in proportion to the six-tenth power of capacity. In this connection, the economist also notes that capital-output ratios in fast-growing countries are lower even as between comparable industries,

whereas investment-output ratios are higher.

Remembering how recent literature emphasizes technical progress as a stimulant of economic growth, the economist looks at the technological achievements of fast-growing countries, and finds that they are certainly not in the vanguard. While some of them are quite advanced in some fields, those are not always the fields which contribute to their fast economic growth; and in general the fast-growing countries are heavy importers of technology. What distinguishes them is that their industries are always running into technical problems in the course of their expansion, and buy the solutions of the problems wherever they are available. The inducement to invest is high; and since the inducement to invest is governed by expectations of profit, these expectations are optimistic. Further, the industries have the resources, financial as well as physical, to implement expansion projects. Financial resources are furnished to them by high profits, and engineering and fabrication are sufficiently extensive to build virtually all equipment within the country. In fact, fast-growing countries are characterised by relatively large and advanced engineering industries.

### Economic Policies

Armed with this meagre knowledge, the economist might sit down to re-fashion the economic policies. He would introduce a budget in which he would abolish all corporation profit and dividend taxes and introduce a tax on wages. To counter accusations that he is a pro-capitalist, he would devote a certain proportion of his revenue to buying shares into industrial enterprises. He would impose a lower tax on non-wage costs, and exempt from it all expenditure on workers' housing, severance pay and retirement benefits. He would replace all personal taxes by taxes on identifiable items of luxury, such as housing and garden space per capita, cars, air-conditioners, coolers, refrigerators. As the general standard of living rises, he would

steadily reduce taxes on old luxuries and impose taxes on new luxuries that emerge.

To encourage higher investment rates and lower capital-output ratios, he would impose a tax on the gross block of fixed assets of enterprise, and give a subsidy on new investment in fixed assets.

### Trade

In trade policy, he would abolish all import prohibitions, and impose a uniform import duty on all goods other than those that can be smuggled in. Of the goods that are easy to smuggle, he would ban the possession by private individuals of precious metals, and order the confiscation of all hoards, including all ornaments made of them. He would encourage and subsidise the production at home of all other goods worthy of smuggling. He would impose taxes on the home consumption of all exportable goods, unless they are already taxed as luxury items. He would bury the gold-exchange standard and introduce a floating rate. To regulate it he would use the import duty and consumption taxes in the beginning; as time goes he would build up a gold hoard and use it for exchange stabilisation.

And planning? He would use it for three purposes. Firstly, he would make forecasts of supplies and requirements by industries and give them publicity, so that industries take steps to expand capacity in good time. Secondly, he would set up a team of technicians to keep an eye on developments in technique and scale in various industries, and use it to cajole or force industries at home to be more advanced technically than they would have been. Thirdly, he would set up organisations to buy up foreign know-how that enterprises want imported and make it available free to everyone who wants it.

However, much before the economist gets through this programme, he will be thrown out. He will also thereby save his neck, and get back to worrying about how to live happily ever after.



# No planning frame

ASHOK RUDRA

THE budget for 1968-69 accurately reflects the fact that this country has no economic planning any more, nor does it propose to have any in the near future. In the

entire budget speech of the Finance Minister there are practically no references to planning. In matters of policy there are three things highlighted: the so-

called 'new' agricultural strategy; export promotion; and revival of the industrial activity in consonance with the high tide of production in agriculture. The policies with respect to each, as articulately formulated in the speech or as reflected in the financial allocations are unexceptionable. As a matter of fact, the practice here seems to be totally loyal to textbook precepts.

### Nothing Original

The most striking feature of the budget, the deficit of Rs. 290 crores, is not at all striking for any originality of economic thinking behind it or any controversial aspects, but merely because it goes against the oft stated dogmatic stand of Morarji Desai about budget deficits. Whether to take this as an indication of an unsuspected flexibility in his mental apparatus or a lack of firmness in his principles could be a matter of taste.

There is going to be a largely increased supply of foodgrains in the country, much of which would or could be made to enter the market so that an increased supply of money is in any case called for if foodgrains prices are to be prevented from falling precipitately. There is no reason why the money creation is not to be done through the technique of budgetary deficit rather than by any other means and nothing is hurt excepting Morarji Desai's earlier dogmatism. But to say that in the context of a jump in the availability of food products, deficit financing of a certain order would not have serious inflationary repercussions is not the same thing as saying that the same step would lead to a revival in the industries. While it is no doubt true that shortage of agricultural raw materials on the one hand and shortage of food products giving rise to wage pressure on the other constituted one prime factor underlying the recessionary situation in the industries, there are many other factors which cannot be affected this way or that way by any budgetary measures.

At least two other important factors can be identified. Shortage

of imported raw materials have ground to a halt many an industry; and apart from the perennial problem of foreign exchange shortage, our specific development has acutely aggravated this shortage for industries. We are referring to the difficulties the western aid giving countries have created ever since 1965 in giving aid. While the government to government capital transfer has not certainly stopped altogether, so much uncertainty has been deliberately created about every bit of such transactions as to be the single most decisive reason for the scuttling of the entire process of planning in this country.

The other causal factor behind the recession is related to what has just been said: the very fact of postponement of the plan has meant investment in the public sector at a much lower rate than was anticipated during the third five-year plan. A lower rate of capital formation has meant a lower demand on the products of the capital goods industry, principally the engineering industries. The depressing effects of these two related factors were further augmented by the rush of private investments that followed the devaluation, giving rise to excess capacities.

### The Aid-Givers

It may be underlined once again that these two factors, shortage of imported raw materials and the falling off of orders from public sector projects, giving rise to a declining spiral of demands for raw materials and capital goods and industrial investments, have got their roots ultimately outside the country, among the policies of the aid giving countries. There may be differences of opinion about the reasons behind these changed conditions attending upon the flow of aid. One view of the matter is that the domestic difficulties of the aid giving countries, in particular the United States' disastrous involvement in the Viet Nam war, has reduced the capa-

city of these countries to give aid at previously maintained rates.

### Cold War Politics

Another view, which the present writer finds more acceptable, is that the stoppage of aid commitments, if not of actual aid, has got more to do with cold war politics and the long term imperialist ambitions of American capitalism than with any of its short term difficulties. In support of this view, one may point at the concerted way in which the aid giving countries of the West have been switching on and off aid flows, and also to the number of different policy matters relating to our domestic economy upon which these countries' representatives have been exerting pressure in quite an outspoken manner. The Bell Mission sent to pass or fail our planning policies and priorities, the World Bank's role in our accepting devaluation. The controversy about fertilizer plants, these are but a few high points of a total situation that has developed in the relation between aid giving countries and India. The swarming crowd of American and other experts are all over the place in Delhi. Many are looking into every top secret file, talking to every high level policy maker and checking to what extent detailed policy prescriptions laid down by the American economic authorities are being followed by us.

This attempt at open intervention started in 1965 when the opportunity provided by the Indo-Pakistan war was seized by the western countries to announce a stoppage of all military and economic aid. The timing was politically convenient, but the problem had ripened over the entire course of the third five-year plan. It may not be remembered by many now that the third five-year plan strategy and policies were never approved of by India's American advisers and, if its foreign aid requirements were underwritten, this was done grudgingly and with a determination and expressed forewarning that no such defiance

by India of the American line. For India's development would be tolerated in future.

### Crisis of Independence

India's economic crisis is therefore fundamentally a crisis of her independence and, if this understanding be correct, the talk of the present year proving to be a year of general economic revival is premature and irresponsible. Deficit financing cannot make available more of imported raw materials nor loosen the purse strings of the aid giving countries on whose bounties our self inflicted dependence is so total and abject. Of course, the extremely sharp increase in agricultural production unless counteracted by price falls, would lead to a corresponding increase in farm income and thence to an increase in demand for agricultural machinery, agricultural inputs and industrial consumer goods. That this might lead to a largely increased utilisation of capacities in many branches of industry may indeed be expected quite legitimately.

One may not however deduce from this a generalised resumption of industrial growth for the simple reason that it was not decline in these demands arising from the agricultural sector which in the first place precipitated the crisis in our industries, though it might have certainly played a certain part and the beneficial effects of increased agricultural production would not be more than proportionate to this part. It may also be mentioned that there is a danger of the full beneficial effects not being realised due to the totally wrong headed policy of the government to import several million tons of wheat even during this year of record harvest. An excess supply of food grains might well lead to price falls which would reduce the impact of the bumper harvest and deficit financing all along the line.

Apart from all this, one can talk about revival if one is visualising a continuing process of economic growth. How does such a process of sustained growth get unleashed through one bumper harvest and

one budgetary deficit? The answer that would forthcome is obviously that from now on there will be a series of ever larger harvests. Those who use the language of revival are the same as those who talk of an agricultural revolution just around the corner. That introduction of capitalist methods of farming in many parts of the country are changing the rural landscape in those areas and that the spread of high yielding varieties is bringing about a much more widely distributed economic improvement in our agriculture is a matter about which there would be general agreement if the assessment is kept at that vague-quantitative level. But one would require to have much more firmly based quantitative estimates before one could engage in making serious projections.

### No Quantitative Ideas

Economists and government policy makers who express such naive faith in the agricultural revolution have no precise quantitative ideas as to the extent these modern methods have already spread and to what extent the change may be expected to bring about, once and for all, a raising of the floor level of agricultural production and to what extent it would mean a continuing rise of that level.

Whether there is indeed going to be an agricultural revolution or not, and whether or not that revolution could lead to a general revival of economic growth or even its further acceleration—one thing is clear. All these developments would take place without any planning. Planning may not be an end by itself—protagonists of planning advocate it only as a means of achieving a continuing process of development—but there should be less of demagoguery about it. Tax reliefs, subsidies, deficit financing and all such tools of the finance ministry may be used within the framework of planning. In the budget presented last month, they are made use of in complete disregard of any such frame, which is what establishes beyond any doubt that no such frame exists any more.

# Scuttling again

J. D. SETHI

THE Finance Minister, Morarji Desai, has tried to present, amidst growing resentment against the government, a 'popular budget' which has got all the qualities of supreme economic caution. The word 'politics' does not appear anywhere in his speech, and yet the fact remains that his budget clearly reflects the deep uncertainty and withering defensiveness of the Congress Party in contrast to its, now long past, old confidence and purposefulness. It is a budget of the Congress, by the Congress and for the Congress as it were, on its way out. And yet it contains precious little by which the opposition can take on the Congress Party for a show down. After all, politics, though of weakness and not of strength, is taking command over intractable and elusive economics.

The 1968-69 budget was expected to answer two questions: (1) what is the state of the economy and (2) what are the likely assumptions and prospects for the next plan? Straightaway, it does not answer either of them. The clever men of the Finance Ministry, however, indirectly tell us that the nation is muddling through, without their owning the real responsibility for the muddle and, more important,

that the plan is as good as dead, although a blueprint of it should be ready sometime next year. There is no knowing how such conclusions have been arrived at, but there is no mistaking them either. It should be a matter of some worry to D. R. Gadgil who, I am afraid, is going to bear the brunt of it all including the tight-rope walking he will have to do in explaining away the game of diabolical pragmatism whose progenitors are hell bent on scuttling the plan as well as the Planning Commission. The Administrative Reforms Commission's politically motivated attack on the Planning Commission is not an isolated phenomenon. It is a part of the same game.

Of course, it is evident that the Planning Commission carries upon itself the burden of innumerable sins of omission and commission in the past. But, so long as it is bogged down in hack-work and remains terrified of opening up the debate, somewhat reminiscent of the great debate in the 'middle fifties, as to what is wrong about old fashioned planning and how to go about correcting it, it will remain the whipping boy of every ambitious and corrupt politician and double-crossing economist of neo - Keynesian - Marxist vintage

who seems to be deserting, like the proverbial rat, the sinking ship of the Planning Commission, if not of the national economy. The Planning Commission, for example, had no business, nor did it lie in its competence and function, to have taken up sides on the proposed Tata fertilizer project. Morarji Desai, given all the courage and boldness, will be fighting a losing battle of bringing the economy back on the growth path if he fails to smell the rat within his own ranks.

### Crucial Questions

The budget has indulged in no sophistry with regard to the short-term objectives. Almost all the important fiscal aspects of the budget are directed towards (1) reviving the private capital market, (2) creating confidence in business, (3) generating enough demand to make the economy, as emerging from the backlog of the recession, to pick up. These measures leave unanswered the most crucial questions that lie behind these objectives. For example, is the capital market in India a function of tax rates? In the best year, the equity capital raised by companies from the market has been pitifully low. Whose confidence is it meant to raise? Of the tax-dodging expense-accounting big capitalist or a vast body of medium size businessmen who form the back-bone of our economy but dare not go to the capital market which remains until today the monopoly of big business? Is it the lack of demand or the high cost and distorted structure of industries that created the recession? The high priests of our administration are reluctant to answer these questions because they will have to place themselves in the dock in order to answer them.

Let me quote here from the UN study a most elementary yet most crucial relationship which should obtain between the budget and the plan—the sort of relationship the Indian planners never came to have a grip on:

'In a developing country with a mixed economy where formal

operative planning takes place with respect to the public sector, the budgetary system plays a very important role in the implementation of public sector development programmes. The planning and budgetary processes are essentially complementary to each other but in actual practice, the relationship between them has often been weak and tenuous. Weaknesses lie on both the sides and a correction of them would strengthen both processes and reinforce their support to each other. What is needed in the formulation and elaboration of plans is continuity, flexibility, consistency and rational approach to project evaluation. The important considerations in improving the budgetary process are structuring the plan problems in the budgetary system, a proper organization and accounting of the available data, and introduction of work measurement systems so as to evaluate performance and create cost consciousness.'

### Disjointed and Marginal

Looking back since 1947 at twenty years' experience of budget formulation, one is struck by the shocking fact that each year's budget proposals added up to no more than disjointed marginal incrementalism over that of the previous year, beginning with the very archaic structure of colonial days. At no time was the basic re-structuring of the budget, its procedures and norms accountability made to conform to the requirements of the plan. At no time was even a thought given to introducing built-in flexibility in the budget which could make it easier for the plan to adjust to events or developments which might alter the basic assumptions of the plan. (Built-in flexibility of a developing country is radically different from that of a developed country.). Instead, the Indian budget has acquired the most perverse flexibility, namely, whereas non-development expenditure is maintained, the hammer falls on the development expenditures whenever the rate of revenue accruals declines. On the other hand, when revenues were buoyant, both expenditures moved up, non-development ex-

penditure increasing faster than development expenditure.

### The Stages

The relations between planning and budgetary or any other policies have gone through three stages of development in India. For fifteen years, Indian planning went on merrily without a policy-frame. Not that the five-year plans were hanging by their own bootstraps, for there were indeed innumerable policies of a sort. But most of these policies were as much internally inconsistent, if not mutually cancelling one another, as they lagged far behind or rushed far ahead of the targets and objectives which they were supposed to fulfil. Policies thus lacked a frame or design of any type. When the third plan ran into difficulties, as it was bound to under the first big jolt, up went the cry for a plan holiday, a demand to which the government cravenly yielded inch by inch instead of confronting it by evolving a much needed policy-frame.

A fact of remarkable note is that the third plan, into the preparation of which a lot of care and scientific effort had gone and which was based on a model more consistent than the previous plans, had to be all but discarded because the post-Nehru, or post-1962, governments have never had any policy, muscle or nerve at all to reshape policies when required. The second stage was one of emphasis or consolidation so to speak, but really of policies without a frame and a plan. The legitimate argument behind a plan-holiday was the respite needed to consolidate past gains. The plan was thrown out, but no one ever afterwards heard of consolidation which still remains a valid demand, plan or no plan. The third stage, starting from the 1968-69 budget, does not mark any going back to either a plan or policy-frame but to a new planned *ad hocism* to end all planning, for ever if possible.

There is, perhaps, hardly any subject about which so many webs of sophistry have been woven as

about the public-private sector controversy. One would have thought the controversy had settled once and for all in favour of a mixed economy. Nobody seems to be questioning that as such, but it has become a matter of daily exercise among pressure groups to rave about the 'mix' itself, particularly with regard to the impact fiscal policies have on this 'mix'.

### Legitimate Problems

There are some legitimate problems to be met here, and if one is to be in the least serious about planning then one cannot turn away from them. First, the public sector by and large has so vastly bungled as to require a halt to its further expansion until such time as it can both function on some minimum principles of efficiency and optimality and develop such capacities as are necessary for such functioning. However, in the meantime we can ill afford to postpone the programmes for new investment and growth, although it appears that in view of the weak and divided national political leadership, such a postponement has become a practical possibility. Therefore the government is now grappling with the decision of how to abdicate its responsibility for planning without fuss.

Second, the Finance Minister has been left with very little flexibility on the revenue side, not merely because of the slowing down of the growth rate, which has made it difficult for recession to disappear amidst a bumper harvest, but also because most taxes have been over-extended. Direct taxes appear to be very high because they have been overstretched vertically without expanding their horizontal base proportionately and in depth. On the other hand, indirect taxes have been vastly expanded horizontally, as they should have been, but much too much in depth. So much so that any further upward revision of indirect taxes, except those on luxuries, is most likely to raise product prices by the same proportion under the existing pattern of income distribution. In brief, the size of the deficit or surplus

in the budget no longer depends upon the tax rates.

Third, on the expenditure side, the Finance Minister has even smaller manoeuvrability at his command. A large part of the revenue expenditure is tied up with current expenditure on past development, defence and, above all, on social services, etc. It is not within the power of the ruling party and its weak leadership to cut down politically oriented expenditure. Hence, economies in expenditure, as demanded by dwindling resources, fall on development; a fact which does not increase but positively decreases the manoeuvrability of our budget-makers. The growth of bureaucracy as an autonomous factor of power, without its being subjected to some minimum norms of efficiency, honesty and functional decision-making, has militated against an optimum distribution of expenditures.

Last, though not the least, was the most significant and disastrous reversal of roles in policy-making forged through the misapplication of foreign aid. An increasing proportion of foreign aid came to be used for general budgetary support on the revenue side and a smaller proportion was tied to development. There is no doubt that a part of the former was used for development as well, but foreign aid resources, particularly from PL 480 funds, strengthened the built-in inflexibility of non-development expenditure. Instead of utilizing foreign aid for accelerating resource mobilization and increasing domestic savings in the economy, Indian planners have been guilty of making it a substitute for the required internal effort. In general, the basic assumption behind the public sector that it will supply increased public savings in view of the low level of private savings has been falsified.

### The Choice

All these and many more such problems have posed a real challenge to the government. Faced with a static resource position and economic mismanagement it can,

as it must, decide for one of the two choices before it. The first choice is to so re-structure policies and approaches as would bring about the necessary degree of integration between the processes of budgeting and planning and, if necessary, would also bring the two under the same organizational units. Over the year, there has developed a lack of rapport between the plan and the budget on account of their institutional separation. The link between the budget, which is an annual exercise, and the plan, which is targetted for five years, grows tenuous as the two proceed on their respective courses. Often the budget-makers and planners are overtaken by events which happen to alter the basic assumptions on which plans are formulated.

### Bold Exercise

Every five-year plan in India is unrecognizable as an end product from its initial formulation. Whereas planning is a continuous economic activity, the budget is a once-for-all hammer that falls at the end of February every year. This gap between dynamic and comparative static situations not only leads to large uncertainties, particularly of taxation for the private sector, but also constitutes a source of delays and difficulties in plan implementation. A bold exercise, simultaneously, in a three-year plan and three-year budget may prove more rewarding because, under this system, a large effort of the Ministry of Finance which is now wasted in preparing and pruning annual estimates and ritualistically slashing them could be diverted to the proper evaluation of each project on the criteria of work management principles. In brief, the budget must perform the policy, programming and evaluating functions, all at the same time. These approaches would require not a weak but a strong Planning Commission.

The second choice is the simpler of the two and, given political short-sightedness, also the more likely one to be adopted. The government can keep following the course of policies and practices of the past, while allowing them to

be nibbled on the way, which will render, if they have not done so already, the budget an unserviceable tool of planning and thus leave the market to take over, generate whatever surpluses can be generated in the normal course, set up its own priorities and produce and distribute on principles of demand and supply. The budgetary policies can be used only to soften the rigour and cruelty of the market forces. In brief, the economy can have at best a regulated and full-fledged capitalism and all that goes with it, including a very moderate growth rate.

Such an approach does not guarantee competition because the government having created over years big oligopolies cannot force them to behave like competitive firms. It will have to be a capitalism of the captive market. Nor can the softening of the rigours of the market be assured because business, as a powerful pressure group, will see to it that the budgetary and public sector policies are largely diverted towards the government, providing it with cheap services of the infra-structure at whatever level of tax rates, though far below the existing rates, that these services can be sustained. It is not surprising that the States' demand for the downgrading of the Planning Commission, cutting down the Centre's spheres of economic activity, and slashing of the defence budget, etc., find sympathetic echo among organized big business.

### Decision-Making

No one will deny that the government's task today of decision-making is not easy, and is not made any the easier by the squeamish attitude of the Planning Commission. It is inconceivable that the government and the Planning Commission may, for their political survival, plump for the indicative planning of the French type. A good case can be made for it to be adopted, as an interregnum, until new boldness, confidence and purpose become operative. It may be so. What is not yet fully appreciated is the fact that French-style planning, to

be successful in India, will require much more than simple freezing of the public sector or allowing it a small modicum of growth. It would require some kind of political decision and policies which would, in short time, break up the hold of big business on the market to make the forces of competition operate which, in turn, would require the separation of the management from the ownership and an end to all political interference of business in the administration as well as the latter's network of graft into the pockets of the former. Who will bell the cat?

### Abdicating Responsibility

I will take only one illustration from the budget to show that the abdication of responsibility to the national economy and scuttling of policies for planning is the aim of those who have prepared the budget in the Economic Affairs department of the Ministry of Finance. This abdication is also fully matched by similar political motives of the Congress leadership.

Nowhere is all this written so unmistakably as in Morarji's now totally changed views on deficit financing, and probably rightly so. There are enough economic arguments which can be adduced in support of the government undertaking a substantial measure of deficit financing for strict development purposes. Politically, also, it is today difficult, if not damaging, for the ruling party to make through taxes a large dent in the pockets of those critical sections of the community who have the capacity, though not the desire, to meet any disproportionate burden of public expenditure from which they, of course, benefit disproportionately.

It would be incorrect to assume that the noticeable change in Morarji's views on deficit financing was forced upon him by the current year's events having made nonsense of his much vaunted ban on deficits. On the contrary, it was quite remarkable that despite massive political pressures from all sides to spend and distribute liberally, he resisted them all and

did not yield even where he could have done so more profitably and justifiably. The huge deficit of Rs. 300 crores in the current year's budget was almost entirely due to the shortfall in the estimated revenues about which something more will be said later. The receipts from import duties, Railways, Posts and Telegraph, public sector undertakings, fell by just about as much as the total deficit.

If, as according to the budget, the economy is likely to pick up next year, particularly in view of the bumper crop this year, he could have easily forced down on Parliament his old views on deficit financing. But he did not do so. Why? Simply because the political price of raising through taxes an additional Rs. 300 crores would have been incalculable. Morarji has often described himself as one who keeps his party's interest at the top of the priority list. Indeed, he has provided a powerful prop to the Congress Party, if only the party cares to find out and chart its course from where Morarji has left it. Much as one may hope, it is unlikely that the Congress Party will be able to capitalize on the boost Morarji's budget has indirectly given to it.

How much the economy will lose by what is not said or done in the budget is anybody's guess. The proposed deficit financing may generate new demand, but in the absence of other countervailing measures it is most unlikely to generate new savings without which inflationary recession, which has struck very deep, and the economic stagnation that flows from it, cannot be removed. Certainly, the economy cannot be brought back on the growth path, deficits or no deficits, so long as the critical minimum level of savings is not achieved. The inevitable need for larger savings has been sacrificed at the altar of political expediency.

### Political Consideration

There is one other incontrovertible evidence for the ascendancy of politics over economics. On the expenditure side, a factor which

considerably contributed to the large deficit in the current year was the heavy overdrafts of States. Morarji never minced matters in denouncing such overdrafts. His admonitions may have had some sobering effects on some States, but to date there is no end to overdrafts. In his budget speech, Morarji, while deploring the existing situation, found a new justification, namely safeguarding the plans of the States to allow further overdrafts for the next year. He has also added this rider: 'I trust that State governments will not precipitate a situation in which we will be obliged to reconsider the existing banking facilities enjoyed by the States with the Reserve Bank.'

This new trust in the State governments has come in the wake of the quit notice which the Congress gave to the opposition at its Hyderabad session and which has evoked a violent reaction among the non-Congress parties. The Union Government cannot afford to abdicate its federal responsibility and the Congress leaders at the Centre had to distinguish between that responsibility and their role as party men. Morarji has attempted to win the federal government the confidence of the States by jettisoning his original stand on deficit financing.

### Misleading

A true measure of the deficit is much larger than that shown by the budget calculations. It is defined as a difference between public expenditure and domestic receipts from taxation, borrowing and surpluses from public undertakings. For many years now, two items, namely the external aid and the drawing down of our external assets, have been concealing from view the rapidly rising deficits in Union finances. The third item, i.e., created money, acquired by way of issuing *ad hoc* Treasury Bills, constituted a much smaller proportion of the total. Of course, the short-term monetary effects of different items are different, sometimes even mutually cancelling one another. But in the long run, foreign loans are potential budgetary deficits in as much as

they have to be repaid one day, particularly if the capacity to repay does not improve correspondingly, as indeed it has not done so.

### The Disappearance

Also, for the first time, it is established that a certain degree of underestimation of revenues, which attended every annual budget and which in fact reflected the strength and buoyancy of the economy, was the most valuable extra-budgetary cushion that was gratuitously available to the government. Morarji Desai no longer possesses that cushion to rest on. The disappearance of these unbudgeted revenues can be explained only in one or the other of the following ways. The government accounting system has improved so suddenly and sharply as to permit exact forecasts. There is, of course, no evidence of this, particularly because every other forecast has gone wide off the mark.

Again, it may be that the clever men of the Economic Affairs Department deliberately overestimated revenues last year and the inherent underestimation of the system cancelled out the excess. There is no reason to believe so because the methods of estimation remain exactly the same as before. It can also be suggested that those who pay taxes have evolved new and better methods of tax evasion and avoidance. There is a large measure of truth in this suggestion but revenue collections have not shown the same degree of error in all cases in which tax evasion should normally be of the same order.

Finally, the economy may have lost its in-built resilience. The last explanation seems more plausible than all the others because of the supporting evidence found in the lower growth rates that have attended rapidly rising public expenditure. It is difficult not to suspect that a situation of much larger potential deficits has developed.

What should be most worrying in the present budget is the

underestimation of the deficit. The prospects for foreign aid do not appear as bright as the Finance Minister has budgeted for. Certainly, prospects this year are far dimmer than those of the last year during which the utilized aid fell short of the target by more than one hundred crores. The shortfall for the next year should be, at least, of the same order if not more, in view of what has transpired at the UNCTAD meeting and the continuation of the Viet Nam war.

There is also a gross underestimation of money required for programmes of internal procurement. The budgeted sum of Rs. 138 crores can finance procurement of only less than two million tons of foodgrains. Either the procurement target of 6 to 7 million tons is going to be slashed down or, if the government is serious about the original minimum target, another sum of Rs. 200 crores will be required for maintaining reasonable buffer or pipeline stocks.

### Nightmare

It all looks like a nightmare. The year 1968-69 with all the politics and the best will on the part of the government, may end up with a deficit of anything between Rs. 500 to 600 crores. This order of deficit is more than inflationary; it is anti-growth. How much deficit one or two bumper harvests can absorb is anybody's guess. But certainly not this order of deficit in one year, particularly in view of the fact that the growth of industrial production will remain, as the budget says, on the rather low side of five per cent. One can only hope that the Finance Minister will, somewhere during the year, pick up the threads of economic essentiality and put politics in the background; budgeting in any one year need not be a once and for all exercise. Popularity and economic caution are not always the best friends of a finance minister. The deficit of about Rs. 300 crores, as proposed in the budget, seems to strike a right balance. But balance for what? Certainly not for growth or economic rationality.



# Taxation

MAHFOOZ AHMED

TAXES have grown considerably during the course of the three plans. Different taxes have not, however, increased in similar ways and as their effect differs from tax to tax, such changes would naturally have different implications. In a planned economy, these changes cannot be treated in isolation. Evidently, all actions in such an economy have to be coordinated to achieve the desired objectives. The taxation policy also has some important aims in such a context. We have tried here to analyse the growth in taxation and its implications in the context of planning in this country.

There is no short cut in generalising about the impact of changes in various taxes. When there are a large number of taxes, it is not possible to analyse the effect of all of them. Certain broad groups are therefore formed in different ways and are all usually based on the nature of the tax-base or the type of their possible impact. The most frequently used, though basically arbitrary, broad categories are the 'direct' and 'indirect' taxes. Without elaborating on the justification of this categorisation or for that matter their theoretical merits and demerits, it is widely accepted that while the former do favour the poorer section of the population, the latter are a greater burden.

In other words, direct taxes are 'progressive' while the indirect taxes are at best 'proportional' if not 'regressive'. Further, direct taxes are borne by those on whom they are levied, but indirect taxes are 'shifted'. Although these cate-

gories provide a starting point, they are based on very simplified assumptions and can lead to misleading conclusions. For example, in no country are many of the indirect taxes of a truly 'general' nature, while the implications of 'specific' taxes are very complex because these work through changes in the relative prices.

Therefore, this categorisation for the present analysis is made with some reservations. However, our task is somewhat easier because five major taxes in this country account for more than 90 per cent of the total tax revenue. These taxes are the income and corporation tax, land revenue, excise duties, sales taxes and customs duties. The remaining 10 per cent of the total tax revenue is contributed by a large variety of taxes. In fact the 'tax basket' of this country is full of various taxes and does not leave any 'source' untapped. There are taxes like the expenditure tax, profession tax, wealth tax, estate duty, various specific sales taxes such as tax on motor spirit, property taxes, entertainment tax, etc. Besides these taxes, the direct taxes include the first two of the major taxes and the indirect taxes include the last three.

Before we analyse the growth of various taxes, it is worthwhile noting some of the interesting features of the tax structure in this country. The personal income tax is about half of the total income and corporation tax. Most of these taxes are collected from within the urban areas where only about 19 per cent of the total

TABLE 1  
Growth of various taxes in India  
(percentages)

	1950-1 to 1965-6	growth during		
		I Plan	II Plan	III Plan
Total taxes	358.3	20.8	74.3	117.0
Direct taxes.	222.6	15.0	54.5	81.5
Indirect taxes	431.3	24.1	84.4	132.2
Income and Corp. taxes	239.3	1.7	64.2	103.1
Land revenue	117.4	52.9	23.9	14.7
Excise duties	742.7	65.8	146.6	111.8
Sales taxes	516.3	37.2	99.4	125.3
Customs duties	249.5	6.0	2.0	217.0

population lives. Land revenue is the only tax which affects the agricultural sector directly and is undoubtedly regressive. There is also the agricultural income tax in about four States, but the total contribution under this head constitutes only a fraction of the total income generated in the agricultural sector.

Excise duties and sales tax are on the production and sale of commodities, a part of which of course is shifted onwards to the consumers. Similarly, export and import customs duties may be ultimately traced to the non-agricultural sector. Much of the sales tax is 'general' but the rates of tax differ not only from State to State, but also from commodity to commodity. As to the rate-schedule, the personal income tax is quite progressive: the tax rates increasing from 3.5 to about 90 per cent. The corporation tax however, is charged at the flat rate of about 50 per cent. The land revenue is regressive as the tax charged bears no relation to the income from the land. But the commodity taxes and hence the indirect taxes, in general, are 'slightly' progressive, although this conclusion is based on very simplified assumptions.

With these general features in view the above results appear most interesting.

The phenomenal increase in the total tax revenue is quite obvious.

Excise duties and sales taxes have accounted for most of this increase. In fact, we observe an accelerated growth of these two taxes during the entire plan period. Both growth in income and in industrial production were responsible for this acceleration. On the contrary, income and corporation taxes have grown not so rapidly, particularly during the first two plans. Most of this increase in their yield was due to the increase in income (as a percentage of total national income these taxes were only about 2.0 per cent in the last decade). Land revenue contributed significantly during the first plan, obviously because of large scale and redistribution and land reforms. The relative increase has considerably slowed down and is a pointer to the stagnancy of taxes from this source, for the meagre 15 per cent increase in the third plan may be due mainly to an increase in the cultivated area through reclamation, etc.

Customs duties show a very peculiar trend. This is explained by the relative time-lags between the policies of export liberalisation and import restriction. The rapid fall in the export duties in the first and the early part of the second plan could not be off-set by the corresponding increase in the import duties. The rapidly increasing import duties, however, more

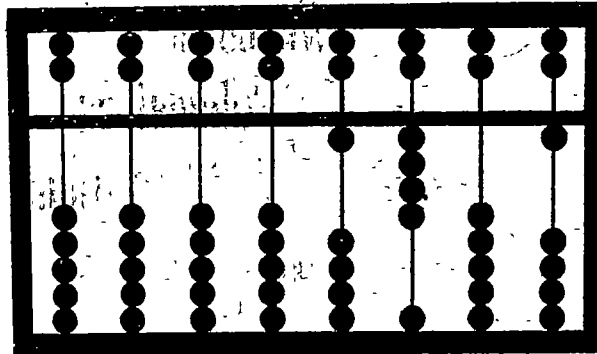
than off-set the marginal decline in the already very low yield under the export duties, especially during the last three years of the third plan. In fact, due to this fact, the relative share of customs duties in the total tax revenue increased from 13 per cent in 1960-61 to 18 per cent in 1965-66.

All of these tendencies are reflected in the growth pattern of the broad categories, viz., the direct and indirect taxes. For instance, the increase in the tax yield under direct taxes is about half of that under indirect taxes. This is also true for the plan periods where indirect taxes have grown more rapidly than direct taxes. Even in relation to the national income, the growth in these, particularly in the indirect taxes, has been very large. Most of the increase in the percentage of total taxes to national income, i.e., 6.7 per cent in 1950-51 to 14.3 in 1965-66, was made possible by the increase in indirect taxes (whose percentage to national income increased from 4.3 in 1950-51 to 10.7 in 1965-66).

A more precise picture of the growth of various taxes is presented by the compound per annum rates of increase of various taxes in the following table. The calculation of these rates was possible because of the systematic pattern of changes in the case of all taxes (except customs duties). Without detailing the technique of calculation, the rates are given for 1950-51 to 1965-66, 1950-51 to 1958-59 and 1959-60 to 1965-66.

#### Interesting Differences

While all of the above observations are confirmed, some interesting differences emerge by dividing the whole period into two halves. Income tax now shows a rate of increase of 15.4 per cent during the second period which is almost equal to that of excise duties and sales tax. This may also be compared with a 3.3 per cent increase in the first period. This increase is also reflected in the broad category of direct taxes. A 21 per cent rate of increase per annum in the customs duties during the second period as against a decline



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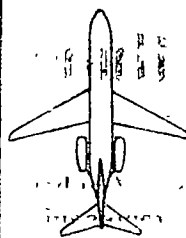
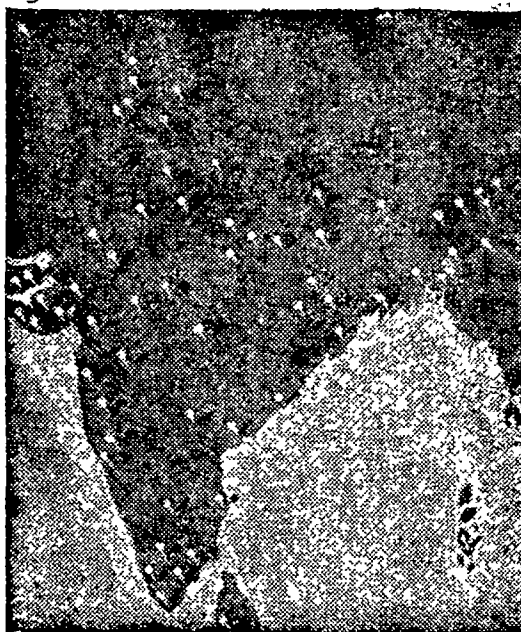
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TABLE 2  
Trend of rates of growth per annum of various taxes

	rate per annum (per cent)		
	1950-51 to 1965-66	1950-51 to 1958-59	1959-60 to 1963-66
Total taxes	10.4	6.4	15.6
Direct taxes	8.5	5.0	12.9
Indirect taxes	11.3	7.1	16.7
Income and Corp. taxes	8.9	3.3	15.4
Land revenue	5.8	8.0	4.1
Excise duties	15.0	14.5	15.4
Sales taxes	13.0	10.4	16.8
Customs duties	5.5	2.0	21.0

of 2 per cent is worth noting. And, finally, almost similar per annum rates in the two periods in case of excise duties and a 4 per cent rate in the second period against 8 per cent during the first period in case of land revenue are also worth noting.

The growth pattern of various taxes as observed above is in no way unusual for a developing economy like India. The excessive reliance on indirect taxes, particularly for the mobilisation of saving for rapid planned economic growth, has been profusely suggested. This also stands to reason, for direct taxes depend mainly on the magnitude of the tax-base, or the income, which is usually very low, and grows rather slowly. Indirect taxes, particularly excise duties, tend to grow very fast for their tax-base expands at a much faster rate due to rapid industrialisation. Maturity of the tax structure leads to reduced reliance on customs duties, not only because of the growing share of other taxes, but also due to the policies relating to exports and imports. While all of this has happened in India, the relative stagnation of the direct taxes in the early period can hardly be justified on account of the low level of income.

As for mobilisation of savings, it is true that we had 'surplus at

current account' throughout the period, yet most of this has come from indirect taxes. The marginal rate of tax out of the increase in income, is estimated by us to be about 20 per cent of which as much as 15 per cent is in the form of indirect taxes. A 20 per cent marginal rate is not too impressive in view of the quite high realised rates in other countries, even though taxes have grown very rapidly during this period.

However, indirect taxes have other effects too. The immediate effect is to raise prices. Their ultimate effect is to reduce consumption and also production to some extent. Such effects get supplemented by expansionist measures like deficit financing. Although it is difficult to assess, yet some of the increase in prices in this country must have been due to the excessive growth of taxation especially during the third plan.

Further, it has been pointed out earlier that indirect taxes are less progressive than direct taxes. As the overall degree of 'tax-progressivity' is a sort of a weighted average of those direct and indirect taxes where, their relative share being the weights, the inflated relative position of indirect taxes—from 64.4 per cent in 1950-51 to 74.9 per cent in 1965-66—must have reduced the overall progres-

sivity of the tax structure. This is assuming that the degree of progressivity of the individual taxes has remained unchanged. This result appears to be very odd when considered in relation to the highly cherished objective of 'reduction in the inequalities in income' in all the three plans. This is, however, only one factor indicating the inconsistency with the plan objectives.

#### Implicit Effects

Other implicit effects of the growth of taxation in the country are not less important. It is quite obvious that the agricultural sector has enjoyed a very preferential position with the planners. Except for land revenue and the agricultural income tax to a very nominal extent, there is no other tax which affects the agricultural sector or for that matter even the consumer in the rural areas. Most of the indirect taxes are collected in the urban areas. The income tax is basically an urban tax as we have pointed out earlier. In contrast, the manufacturing and trade sector paid a greater part of all the taxes, which of course would have affected the production activity in these sectors.

Thus, we have noted that taxes have grown very rapidly in the three plans and the increase in the indirect taxes has been double of that in direct taxes. In general, most of the mobilisation of resources, therefore, has been through indirect taxes. But the resource withdrawal through taxes out of the increment in income has not been very impressive, particularly due to a comparative neglect of direct taxes. Among the effects of this pattern of taxation are: an increase in the degree of inequality, aggravation of the rise in prices, taxation of consumption more than saving, of the non-agricultural sector more than the agricultural sector, of the urban consumer more than the consumer in the rural areas, etc. We do not intend here to make policy prescriptions but hope that this macro-type analysis will provide a better perspective for future policies under planning in this country.

# Books

## RELATIVE RATES OF GROWTH—AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY By Ashok Rudra.

University of Bombay, Bombay 1967.

Growth rates are the visionary images of planning. They are the abstract targets of economic development which the planners hope to realise by injecting varying doses of investment into the different sectors of the economy. The exercise is tricky but easy to manipulate since it can always be started and completed on any number of assumptions. The trick of the trade lies in presenting the results of the exercise in a language comprehensive to the author himself and, to some extent, to his fellow members of the Econometric Model Building Society.

The book under review is a case in point. It starts with a simple but interesting proposition, namely, that 'the notion of priority to be attached to the different sectors of an economy is in contradiction with that of balanced growth strategy according to which investment allocation among the different sectors is to be determined by the requirements of consistency'. But, instead of elaborating or examining the issue any further, the author straightaway plunges into a series of econometric exercises to provide quantitative estimates of the inter-relation between agriculture and industry.

The discussion on balanced vs unbalanced growth is itself confusing. The chapter is simply a reproduction of selected passages from the Indian plan documents and Arthur Lewis' book on *The Theory of Economic Growth*. The conclusion which the author draws from this discussion is not only abrupt but also one which makes the purpose of the discussion itself irrelevant. He says that by definition the concept of unbalanced growth is ruled out since its protagonists themselves are expounding 'an approach towards establishing long term balance through a process of short run imbalances'.

The idea seems to be that the problem is one of defining the short term strategy of planning which, if it is to be oriented towards balanced growth, can have no priorities. Alternative estimates of what the balanced rates of growth are on this assumption are then given for the period 1960-61 to 1970-71. These are:

Estimates	Sector 1 (agriculture, etc.)	Sector 2 (mining, etc.)	Sector 3 (universal inter- mediaries)
1st set	2%	6.6%	5.2%
2nd set	3%	7.8%	6.3%

3rd set	4%	9.0%	7.4%
4th set	5%	10.2%	8.6%
5th set	6.6%	12%	10.3%

The econometric model on which these rates are based suggests that the adoption of any single set of estimates as growth targets for 1960-61—1970-71 will lead to balanced growth of the three sectors. The target rates of growth of the Planning Commission for this period being 3.7 per cent for agriculture and 10.5 per cent for industry, the author concludes that they are unbalanced and hence will continue to cause periodic cycles of crises in one or the other sector.

The painstaking efforts which the author has borne to drive this point home is certainly commendable. Unfortunately, however, the results of his exercise have only an academic value since he has not concerned himself with the more mundane question of whether and how far the suggested rates are realisable. Referring to this limitation in their foreword to the book, M. L. Dantwala and D. T. Lakdawala comment politely but crisply that: 'Rudra avoids scrupulously the more interesting questions of how the growth rate in agriculture could be stepped up, or of what steps could be taken without straining the foreign exchange position unduly to prevent excessive price rise in agricultural products, or of the relative price reactions on growth rate'. The import of the comment is clear, that the suggested rates are either unrealisable or could be realised by causing a chain of reactions amounting to nothing better or worse than unbalanced growth.

Had Rudra been a little more bold, not unduly inhibited by his ideas of intellectual neutrality symbolised in algebraic equations alone, he would have made a better and forceful presentation of his point of view. As it is the presentation suffers from a curious mixture of unrestrained annoyance against those theorising any notion of priority in Indian planning and meticulous care in his analysis to guard himself from touching any controversial issue. In fact, he guards himself so well that he neither deals with the problem of balanced vs unbalanced growth nor uses any language other than the non-communicative mathematical symbols. Even the conclusions of this exercise are nowhere specified.

The theoretical premise of his enquiry is however sound and consistent with commonsense. The value of his work lies in pinpointing the price the economy must pay for a relatively slow rate of growth of the agricultural sector compared to the industrial sector.

**Bookcritique**

## PLANNING AND ECONOMIC POLICY IN INDIA

By D. R. Gadgil.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, III  
Edition, 1965.

THIS collection of Professor Gadgil's essays, notes, memoranda and addresses to different learned bodies is important in many ways. The volume holds out his views on different aspects of planning and economic policy, mainly as an *outsider*. His views on these questions have been fairly consistent and critical. His becoming an *insider*, as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, has given a new dimension to these views.

The specific aspects dealt with in this volume cover a wide range of subjects and topics, including the formulation of the three five-year plans, the role of the Planning Commission, agriculture, transport, manufacturing industries and big business, pricing, employment, housing, and so on. On each of these different aspects, Professor Gadgil has made many points over a period of time, since 1951. In all these he has explored different intricate questions with a graceful abandon and an intimate acquaintance with different practicalities which is almost typical of him. His critical incisiveness is, however, superscribed by a sympathetic understanding of the varied problems of plan formulation and plan implementation.

It is notable that Professor Gadgil marked the un-realism of the whole production plan in the first five-year plan and underlined the absence of adequate, formulated policy relating to industrial prices. In this connection, he also noted the various components of a consistent price policy for the industrial sector. He pointed out the insufficient realisation in the first five-year plan of the social aspects of the plan and their all-pervasive nature. Incidentally, even after the third five-year plan all these inadequacies have continued, although some of the issues raised by him earlier have since been dealt with in the meantime for the purpose of guiding policy and action. He was almost prophetic, as realised later that, 'maintenance of the present standards of living of the rich in India is assured and no diminution can take place either in the economic resources concentrated in their hands or in the fields open to them for profitable activity.'

Similarly, his views on agrarian reform are realistic, although many would disagree with his views on co-operatives. Perhaps, he is a little obsessed by the emergence of monopoly capitalism in India along with the spurt in investment activity. But that his views were not unreasonable in the context of the Indian economic environment, has been given a factual base by some of the subsequent inquiries. The need of expansion of the public sector has been underlined by many others like Professor Gadgil, but the inter-linking and complementary character of these two sectors does not seem to have been anticipated in full. As events have proved, in

the context of the recent recession, a good deal of private sector activity was closely, if not wholly, dependent on the expansion of the public sector; so that Gadgil's counter-measure of public sector expansion to offset the rise of monopoly capitalism or concentrated economic power did not really work.

Similarly, Gadgil's focus on the differentials in salaries and wages would perhaps give rise to a mixed response; none-the-less, even in disagreement, it is not difficult to appreciate that it is really the crux of the matter in the context of an egalitarian society. The role of the Indian Planning Commission as noted by him in 1958 would seem to have been broadly agreed to by the Administrative Reforms Commission, although the rethinking urged by Professor Gadgil may seem to have been a little overdone by the Administrative Reforms Commission.

It appears that the new Planning Commission is giving shape to the nature of plan organisation in the country which Gadgil suggested several years earlier. The stress on decentralisation in planning given recently by the Administrative Reforms Commission also seems to have derived its inspiration from what Professor Gadgil said: 'In India, planning is undertaken for the country as a whole. What is required is not only a planning authority for each State, but for each important geographical region within each State.'

Professor Gadgil, however, went further to suggest the establishment of about 50 planning regions in the country, to start with. Apparently, this idea has not caught much momentum. A start has, however, been made in the decentralisation of planning in terms of the establishment of planning boards in each State. One would also completely agree with him when he says that for policy formulation what is required is not much of national aggregates, but of more detailed information regarding the specific regions and activities and a clearer idea of the actual operations of specific parts of the economic system. There is no gainsaying the fact that this continues to be one of the basic weaknesses of Indian planning and so far not much attention has gone into this. It is expected that under Gadgil's guidance this groping in the dark and playing with aggregates of highly diverse economic phenomena would come to a stop. This, indeed, is the opportunity for Gadgil to translate his ideas into action.

P. Chattopadhyaya

## GOVERNMENT BUDGETING WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA

By B. N. Gupta.

Asia Publishing House, New Delhi. 1966.

There is a general dearth of literature on government budgeting and the books on Indian budgeting are few. Dr. B. N. Gupta can legitimately take pride in presenting a comprehensive picture on government budgeting in his book of 354 pages.

In recent years, government budgeting has acquired a great significance as an instrument of

economic policy. Budgets have become one of the most important means of attaining the economic and social objectives of governments. Gone are the days when they were considered merely as mathematical records of the statement of estimated receipts and expenditure of government. Nowadays the budget has widespread ramifications throughout the national economy because, firstly, budgetary policy is conducted much more deliberately and, secondly, the size of the budget in relation to the rest of the economy has grown so enormously that the power of the budget to affect the rest of the economy has been greatly enhanced.

Budgetary actions of the government affect the production, size and distribution of income capital movements, profits and utilisation of human and material resources of the country. Budgets are also used for controlling and regulating the investment pattern, public and private expenditures, inflationary trends in the economy and for correcting imbalances. As Alan Williams has pointed out (quoted by the author): "The budget tends nowadays to be the focal point in the presentation and implementation of the government's economic policy..."

Government budgeting of late has undergone complete reorientation. Some 25 years ago, government budgets were only money collecting devices. But since the beginning of the last war they have undergone a revolutionary change: their character has changed, their purpose has widened and their importance has increased. Budgets have long ceased, for welfare States, to be mere balancing of annual accounts; they are the instruments of growth and regulators of the economy. Budgets are now used for economic growth and for formulating development plans. Similarly, the techniques of budgeting have undergone changes. Dr. Gupta has very ably traced the changes, in chronological order, in the purpose and techniques of Indian budgeting.

The book has 11 chapters and a well prepared bibliography. In the first chapter the author begins with a historical survey of government budgeting in the United States, the U.K. and India, paying particular attention to the evolution and development of government budgeting in India. Chapter II deals with the theory of government budgeting with special reference to developing countries. Advantages of government budgeting to government and its officers, legislature, citizens and tax-payers, etc., are highlighted though at times the reasons advanced are not very convincing. In Chapter III, the relationship between government budgeting and economic policies is established. The functions, objectives, organisation and classification are given in Chapter IV. The procedure of government budgeting, parliamentary control over budgeting and the budgets of the Indian Union are discussed in Chapter V, VI and VII. The Government of India's budgets from 1950-52 through 1963-64 have been analysed and the major trends in this period of

planned economic development have been identified and traced.

Special problems like budgeting for public enterprises, revenue estimation and control of expenditure have been critically discussed in Chapter VIII. Budgeting for economic development, process of economic development and application of fiscal and budget techniques are discussed in Chapter IX. Budgetary reforms in India are described in Chapter X. Some recommendations have been made concerning the adoption of performance budgeting and performance auditing and also concerning steps necessary to make parliamentary control through committees more effective. Budgeting for defence and development is separately given in Chapter XI.

The book covers the period, from the first plan, i.e., 1950-51 to 1964-65. Probably it would have been more appropriate if the author had also covered 1965-66, the last year of the third plan. From the revenue raising point of view, the period from 1950-51 to 1964-65 has been relatively easy. In the subsequent period new problems have arisen and the government had a strange phenomenon to face, i.e., the twin problem of recession and inflation. The techniques of raising revenue in such a situation might be different from what has been described by Dr. Gupta in his book. Further, the author has not dealt with the budgeting techniques and developments in the centrally planned economies. Information about the budgeting in the socialist countries would have been useful to any student of economics for comparisons between the methods followed in free enterprise economies and the centrally planned economies. Most of the conclusions arrived at in the book are supported by some writer's quotations and an impression is left in the mind of the reader that there is little original work.

On the whole, Dr. Gupta deserves congratulation. The analysis is by and large coherent and the coverage of the subject is very comprehensive. It gives ample evidence that Dr. Gupta has laboured hard in preparing this thoughtful study. I am sure the book will be of immense use to students of economics who are interested in building up knowledge on the subject of government budgeting.

M. L. Garg

#### INDIA'S FOURTH PLAN—Test in Growthmanship

By K. N. Bhattacharyya.

Asia Publishing House, 1966.

Professor K. N. Bhattacharyya teaches economics and problems of planning and development to civil service trainees. He has earlier written about India's five-year plans; and the volume under review is an examination of the Draft Fourth Plan, which was published in 1966, in the context of previous plans and performance.

K. N. Bhattacharyya has a basically poetic concept of the processes of economic planning and



development. His book starts with a 'prelude' and ends with an 'epilogue'. The work is divided into three parts: the first part deals with the history of planned development in India from 1951 to 1965; the second concerns itself with what he calls 'basic issues', which are idealistic norms for painless growth; and the third reviews the Draft Fourth Plan of 1966. Bhattacharyya is a realist and takes pains to explain, at frequent intervals, that one must not expect too much from the planning process per se but, between such reminders, he devotes much space to counsels of perfection, which have strong links with the traditions of balance, avoidance of pain, maximisation of human happiness, etc., which are common to Indian politicians and philosophers.

Bhattacharyya's review of the economic progress that India has achieved during the first three plan-periods has a great deal to commend it. It is readable, lucid and consistent. He highlights the achievements as well as the flaws with clarity; but he does not devote much space or attention to analysis of causes, or to consideration of the implications of other choices.

In the second part, in dealing with basic issues for fiscal policy, monetary policy, foreign trade, and considerations of social justice, Bhattacharyya gives fairly free rein to idealistic considerations. There is a tacit assumption that harsh economic realities can be avoided by affirmation of desirable objectives.

In the third part of his book, in reviewing the size and content of the fourth plan as it was conceived in 1965-66, Bhattacharyya displays commendable realism. At a time when vast numbers of Indian economists, in government and the universities, were carried away by the desire to achieve all desirable goals simultaneously, Bhattacharyya recognised frankly some of the impractical aspects of the plan, and the excessive optimism that was implied in various provisions of it. His plea for greater realism has been amply vindicated by the events of the past two years.

This slim volume is topical today when we are once again preparing ourselves for the next five-year plan. It may not have any solution to offer, but it does highlight some of the considerations that planners must heed.

J. N. Thadani

**UNION BUDGETS: A Factual Study of Finances of Government of India (1950-51 to 1964-65).**

The Indian Merchants' Chamber, Economic Research and Training Foundation, Bombay, 1964.

The budget plays a key role in the execution of economic policy of a government, specially in a developing economy like India. A study of the budgets over a decade is extremely useful. For, apart from being an academic exercise, it reveals various pheno-

mena operating in the economy and their vital inter-relationship. The knowledge of such inter-relationship helps policy formulators in identifying those areas of the economy where the control of the government can be extended and the different sources of revenue on which it is dependent.

In a planned system, this knowledge becomes necessary for effective implementation of development, projects and mobilization and channelling of resources which are of paramount importance.

This study by the Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas Research Wing of the Indian Merchants' Chamber's Economic Research and Training Unit is an attempt to examine the budgets of India over a decade and half. This is purely a factual narration of the details of the union budgets with little attempt to analyse their economic impact on the movement of the economy.

The elaboration of the revenue side of the budgets is fairly comprehensive. It shows clearly how our budgets have consistently underestimated revenue—a significant factor to be considered while planning to raise resources. This exposition is accompanied by the detailed study of each component of the tax-structure that constitutes even a minor source of the government's revenue. Similarly, it gives a clear picture of all other aspects of the budget such as expenditure met from revenue and expenditure on civil administration and defence.

It is significant to note that the government's expenditure has increased by over 400 per cent during the period of study. The defence expenditure has constituted a major share of the total spending—35.9 per cent of the expenditure during the decade 1951-52 to 1960-61. It can be well imagined that this expenditure has risen further during the period after the study, as the real impact of the Chinese and Pakistani aggression on India was felt only after 1962.

Along with the break-up of expenditure on various items of the economy, the study of their growth rates gives an idea of the comparative priority that has been assigned to them from time to time during the given period.

The data presented in the study under review are no doubt of vital importance. But the presentation has often been marred by lack of precision. Some data and figures have been repeatedly given at the cost of integration of the subject treatment. One is lost in a maze of statistics that often come in the way of proper comprehension of the budgetary trends.

The actual impact of the budgetary policies on the economy and an examination regarding the extent of achievement of the objectives set out in the budgets have hardly been discussed. And this could be the most serious handicap for a study of this character.

Sumitra Chishti

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## MINORITY IN CRISIS

a symposium on the  
present situation  
of the muslims

symposium participants

### THE PROBLEM

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### A NEW POLITY

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### FRAMEWORK OF POLITICS

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### TASKS AHEAD

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### BOOKS

Reviewed by **Anees Chishti**, **Mohammed Ayoob**,  
**H. S. Takulia** and **Kusum Madgavkar**

### FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography  
compiled by **D. C. Sharma**

### COVER

Designed by **Dilip Chowdhury**

# The problem

FOR over two decades the Muslims in India have been living in a world of perpetual doom—a world haunted by the memories of an ignoble past and the prospects of a future pregnant with revenge. The Hindus distrust them, even hate them for what happened in the past. They suspect their love and loyalty to the country and are afraid of the potential



threats to its political future because of their religious and family ties with the people of Pakistan, their attitudes and behaviour, the continued rise in their numerical strength, and their apparent lack of enthusiasm in various nation building activities.

The way Indo-Pak relations have shaped all through these years has made the position of Indian Muslims all the more critical. The Hindus expect them to sever their ties—religious, family and emotional—with the people of Pakistan. Their kith and kin across the border expect them to be loyal to Islam and through it to Pakistan. On their own, they have neither the courage to claim the confidence of the Hindus nor the will to sever their ties with the people of Pakistan.

The choice is indeed a difficult one. To rise to the expectations of the Hindus is a political necessity even though it may offer nothing except some security and, probably, at a later stage, a sense of belonging. But it is humanly impossible to sever family and religious ties simply because the political ties have been snapped between two neighbouring countries who were once the members of a single nation. Almost every Indian Muslim has a relative in Pakistan—a brother or a sister, a son or a daughter, parents or friends. Partition has separated them physically and politically but not emotionally or socially. To expect the ties to be broken at these links is not only too much but also absurd.

A change in India-Pakistan relations flowing with the milk of love may probably help generate harmonious relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. Alternatively, time may heal up the wound provided it is left to follow its medical course of healing up. On either count, the possibilities are however remote. Even then, a beginning has to be made not on humanitarian grounds alone but also to preserve and promote the political and economic security of the country. It may sound rather crude but the point needs to be stressed that a panic-stricken herd has only two alternatives to follow: it has either to run for its life and probably perish on-the-run or else to turn back and attack in sheer desperation, perishing again but with the consolation that the other side too has suffered some casualty.

The Hindus may not realise this. But the rumbling is steadily becoming audible. The educated Muslim youth in India is increasingly turning into a communal dogmatist of the worst type. The fact that he cannot voice his protest freely, the frustration following from his suppressed emotions, makes him all the more tense and bitter. The periodic outbreak of communal riots in northern India has only helped him to swell the rank and file. Many others who were

never reconciled to the fall of Muslim glory or, worse still, with Hindu dominance, are also supporting the movement, some surreptitiously, others more openly. The former include the middle class in general and the latter a section of Muslim religious leaders.

This 're-emergence of Muslim communalism', as S. Abid Husain explains, 'is the same movement of religious communalism which had started shortly before 1947, had temporarily subsided after partition and is now coming to the surface again... Its fundamental idea... is that true Muslim society can exist only in a country where the government is in the hands of Muslims and, is carried on according to Islamic law'.\* The growing popularity of this movement can be seen in almost all walks of Muslim life—cultural, social, economic, educational and political, the last two being the most prominent.

The factors helping the movement to grow are many and complex. Historically, religious tolerance has never been the strong point of Islam. Culturally, it has been far more a closed system than other major cultures. Consequently, its hold on its followers has remained quite strong and gripping. The phenomenal success of Islam, despite being one of the youngest religions, has further imbibed a sense of pride—arrogance in reality—among its followers. The fact that this arrogance is hurt by the dominance of those very people who were once dominated by them is itself a disturbing factor. Added to this there are other disturbing factors, the worst being the frequent outbreak of communal riots—the tyranny of the strong over the weak.

Some other factors causing communal tension, if not disorder, are: the complete isolation of the two communities—Hindus and Muslims—from each other, the continued hostility between India and Pakistan, the apparent contradiction in the constitutional provisions identifying 'majority' and 'minority' according to the religion of the people on the one hand and party position on the other, the Sanskritisation of Hindustani and the fall of Urdu as an official language, and the like. The worst feature of this tension is that it is only helping the two opposing groups of communal dogmatists to grow almost on a reciprocal basis, each feeding the other with the hope of settling their score violently.

This is a highly explosive situation which if allowed to explode will be only too tragic and shameful for both Hindus and Muslims. Whether and how far it can be checked from exploding depends on *how well* and *when* and

\*The *Destiny of Indian Muslims* by S. Abid Husain, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965, p. 143.

by whom the corrective measures are applied to control or neutralise the factors contributing to its growth. The Hindus being in the majority are naturally expected to lead. This is precisely what the Hindu secularists opposing Hindu communalism and the Gandhians favouring brotherly relations between India and Pakistan have been pleading for, though not tactfully.

The aggressive approach of the former and the appeasement of the other have done more harm than good to their well-meaning cause. In their zeal they seem to have forgotten that by hurting the feelings of the very people whom they wish to reform or restrain, they can achieve precious little, more so since the stakes are too high and the commitments too emotional, deep-rooted and personal. Both ignore the vital fact that the Hindus genuinely feel that they are the aggrieved party, that their hate and distrust are founded on very solid ground which cannot be eroded by angry words nor softened by empty appeals. If anything, these words and appeals make them more bitter and even distrustful of the intentions and wisdom of those appealing to them to be otherwise.

History has taught them a bitter lesson. It has been almost an unending record of suffering and humiliation. For seven hundred years they were ruled by the followers of Islam who perpetuated a class and a society alien to the native soil, contemptuous of the kafir symbolised in Hinduism and prejudiced, if not hostile, against the Hindus. Acculturation or cultural synthesis no doubt followed but more as a result of conversion than out of love or sympathy. One need not go into some of the atrocities committed during those days, but the Muslims being the ruling class did everything to preserve their exclusive identity, hurting and humiliating in the process, the pride and self-respect of the Hindus. The seeds of discontent and vengeance were sown then; the British only exploited them.

What happened during British rule is well known. The two communities broke away from each other leaving a trail of riots and bitter memories. Their relationships which were hardly cordial degenerated into immense hatred, suspicion and fear. Nothing has happened so far to cool down this temper. Except a sudden weakness of strength of one of the parties, the two are as distrustful of each other as they were before. They have not yet found a meeting ground to begin a dialogue on a topic of mutual interest. A search for this meeting ground is the first pre-requisite for bringing the two communities nearer each other.

The search could well begin by locating the factors contributing to the growth of communal

dogmatism, among the Hindus and the Muslims. Some of these factors are rooted in history and culture which cannot be removed except slowly, as and when history itself starts turning a new leaf and the two cultures begin to assimilate into one. But others are more immediate and can possibly be neutralised, even altogether removed from the body politic. Some of these are psychological and emotional in content which can be best softened by the trusted leaders of the respective groups or through reciprocal gestures of goodwill by the two sides. Others are the semi-rational reactions to certain social, political and economic conditions. These can be best resolved by the State and the intelligentsia at large.

Although these factors are thoroughly mixed up, the one giving rise to the other and *vice-versa*, an attempt can still be made to list them in order of their priority and accordingly suggest ways and means of resolving them, keeping in view the broader national interest and objectives. In making this attempt, the views of both Hindus and Muslims, whether secular or communal, should be fully ascertained giving them the freedom to express their opinions freely. Their views could then be presented side by side for an understanding of each other's point of view. There is of course the danger that this may lead to an unhealthy debate. But it is a still healthier practice to initiate a dialogue between two opposing groups who are completely isolated from each other and yet engrossed in acrimonious monologues debasing each other in an atmosphere of fear, suspicion and even conspiracy. A dialogue is one outlet of relieving this pent-up feeling; the others are more hazardous and risky.

To help promote such a dialogue or discussion, the intelligentsia will do well to concern itself with the typical attitudes of average Hindus and Muslims towards each other and accordingly discover the common meeting ground. This is no easy task as can be seen from the following chart listing the attitudes of the two communities towards each other.

The following study of the attitudes of the two communities is based on personal observations of the writer of this paper who has had fairly good contact with them almost since birth. Even then these attitudes need not be taken as fully representative, particularly insofar as the views of various sections of the Hindu-Muslim population are concerned. Nor is it a comprehensive study of any particular section. The words used may sound somewhat rude but these are the actual expressions used currently. The idea is, however, not to make them sound rude but to present the essence of the truth frankly, howsoever unpalatable it may be.

*Attitude of Hindus*

- i. We have won freedom after centuries of suffering, and all through these years the Muslims had the best of it, first as rulers and next as the protege of the British.
- ii. Partition was the result of their demands and deeds and now that Pakistan is there why should we treat them as our equals or not have what we were deprived of for so many centuries.
- iii. Our religious tolerance has led to partition, even forcible conversions. Any further tolerance will only lead to similar results.
- iv. The Muslims have all through been communal minded, ridiculing our religion and way of life, never trying to mix with us.
- v. Even now they have not changed nor have they tried to identify themselves with Hindustan. Most of them still look forward to Pakistan and pay only lip-service to our confrontation with Pakistan.
- vi. How can we trust them when they secretly look forward to Pakistan and abstain from participating in our various nation building activities? Look at the educated Muslim youth who wants to migrate to Pakistan. Look at others who have their relatives in Pakistan and wish them well even though they want India to be ruined. Look at Aligarh and other areas of Muslim population where Muslim communalism is growing rapidly. Look at Kashmir where, despite all that we have done, the Kashmiri Muslims have greater sympathy for Pakistan than for us.

*Attitude of Muslims*

- i. We cannot be blamed for what our ancestors did. The deeds of our ancestors were also not as bad as the Hindu or English historians have sought to depict. In fact, they were the first to give India a political unity enriching her life in every sphere—culture, education, administration, art and literature, etc. It is we who fought the British. The Hindus and not us were proteges.
- ii. Partition was the result of the failure of the Hindu leaders to give us equal political rights. The demand for partition was also not ours. It was only a section of our population which agitated for partition inasmuch as a section of the Hindu population did. We have suffered as much as the Hindus have. Why should we then be treated as second rate citizens.
- iii. Our religion is one of enlightenment. What is called forcible conversion is really the liberation of the down-trodden among the Hindus. At any rate, it is so old a past that there is no point to stress it, more so since the Hindus are now the rulers and are strong enough to protect their interest.
- iv. The Hindus have always been narrow minded, sectarian, superstitious and caste-ridden. There was no question of our mixing up with them, though we did everything for their upliftment.
- v. We have repeatedly tried to identify ourselves with India, but the Hindus will not trust us. We do want India and Pakistan to have better relations, but this does not mean that we are the enemy of India.
- vi. It is the way the Hindus are behaving with us that has made a section of our population look back in anger towards India. The reason the educated Muslim youth wants to migrate to Pakistan is the lack of opportunity for him in India and almost no prospect for him to rise up the ladder. Our ties with Pakistan are natural, human and emotional, and it is absurd to expect us to sever these ties. And why should we when we are distrusted by the Hindus. As for Kashmir, why should the will of the people be ignored in a democracy. Even by the

vii. Why should social reforms affecting religious beliefs or way of living (meaning the Hindu Code Bill and family planning in particular) be restricted to the Hindus alone? Why should the Muslims be exempted from these reforms in a secular State? Look at the Census figures and see how their number is growing in comparison to ours. Is it not a threat to our political future particularly in view of the growing Muslim communalism? (This is quite a strong feeling especially among the Hindu women.)

viii. How can we mix with them when they are so different to us culturally and religiously and are even opposed to our way of living. (Again a very strong feeling among the Hindu women particularly with reference to beef eating).

ix. Muslim politics is oriented not by any political ideology but only to safeguard its communal interest. This is the reason why in the Muslim concentrated constituencies every political party has to put up a Muslim candidate to contest the elections.

x. If democracy is the rule of the majority, why should the Muslim minority be given any special status particularly when its numerical strength is quite sizeable and strong. The educational and other attainments of the Muslims in India are also not comparable with those of the Hindus or Christians and hence giving any special favour to them could be only at the cost of penalising those more meritorious than them.

principles on which partition was made, which was accepted both by India and Pakistan, Kashmir does not belong to India. What is more, you cannot buy people by suppressing or denying them their legitimate political rights.

vii. Islam is an enlightened religion and hence there is no scope for reform. Even if there is any, it is for us and for our religious leaders to decide. A State which is not Islamic has no power nor any business to interfere in it in the name of reform. And it is good that our population is growing faster than the Hindus which is the best safeguard for us to meet the challenge of Hindu communalism.

viii. Culturally and religiously we are not only different but also superior to the Hindus. Circumstances have forced us to accept their dominance but we must not yield, otherwise they will try to absorb us in Hinduism as they did to other religious groups in India which did not guard themselves well.

ix. In Islam political life is also governed by its laws. And in a democracy politics is the only way by which the Muslims can possibly safeguard their interest. By electing Muslim candidates they can balance the political scale at least to some extent.

x. In a democracy it is the obligation of the majority to protect the minority. This can be ensured only by giving it a special status. In fact, there should be constitutional safeguards to protect the minority from exploitation, to ensure educational, employment and other amenities to it through reserved quotas. It is only through this that the weaker section can be brought at par with the stronger section. Otherwise, the strong will continue to grow stronger and the weak weaker.

It is against this background that efforts to bring the two communities nearer to each other have to be made. The gospel of love and brotherhood can be preached only after the ground on which they could meet has been found and a dialogue on a topic of mutual interest to them initiated. Meanwhile, there is no point in showing off the intellectual arrogance of secularism which accentuates rather than curbs communal tension. This is one of the reasons for the phenomenal success of the

Jana Sangh as also of Muslim communalism in northern India.

Apparently, measures will also have to be taken in many other fields to ensure a sense of confidence and trust among the Hindus and the Muslims at large. Some of these can be best taken up by the State and others by the Hindus and the Muslims themselves. It is not the purpose of this paper to suggest what the two communities should do to improve their relations. Suggestions to this effect should emanate

from them, preferably in the light of the problem posed. Then alone is there some possibility of their acceptance. But so far as governmental measures are concerned, it will not be out of place to make a few suggestions. These are stated below.

1. Appointment of a *judicial enquiry committee* whenever there is any communal disturbance anywhere in the country. The committee should be appointed immediately after the disturbances are checked or controlled and its report released at the earliest, preferably within a month. Those found guilty, particularly the chief trouble makers and their primary agents, should be punished severely. Punitive fines should also be levied on the population residing in the affected area to meet a part of the material losses incurred by innocent persons during the trouble. The fine should be fixed as a proportion of the total loss as estimated by the committee, and the communities involved made to pay each other's loss in accordance with this proportion. The community which has suffered more will thus have to pay less and the other more depending on the extent of loss incurred by each of them. The remaining part of the loss should be borne by the State as a penalty for its failure to maintain law and order.

2. The State and district officials, in case of any wilful default on their part, should be suspended immediately and departmental or judicial enquiries instituted against them.

3. All public policies and laws which are essentially functional in scope, except those concerned with specific problems of any particular group, should be enforced on the community at large, irrespective of its religious or caste status. Even in the case of policies dealing with the problems of any particular group, the legal or constitutional definition of the group should be based, so far as possible, on social and economic considerations rather than on religious or caste considerations.

4. Two important measures which the State should introduce in this regard are: (i) enactment of Muslim Code Bill incorporating, among other things, such of those features of the Hindu Code Bill which were found socially desirable for the nation but not extended to cover the Muslims on grounds other than social or economic reforms; and (ii) extension of the family planning programme to include the Muslims inasmuch as the Hindus are included in it.

5. Measures to promote better relations with Pakistan keeping the broader national interest in view. These measures should be such as not to infuriate or even annoy the majority (which apparently no democratic government can

afford to do) but all the same capable of providing some relief to the minority, psychologically or otherwise. Liberalisation of travel and transit facilities to Indian Muslims and their relatives in Pakistan is a case in point. Even under the relations now existing between India and Pakistan, no harm will thus be done if the Indian Muslims are issued passports to visit Pakistan and their relatives in Pakistan are allowed to visit India on a more liberal basis. A gradual strengthening of trade and commerce relations with Pakistan could be another way of improving the neighbourly contacts. Though this can be done only if the other side is also willing, offers in this respect can be made without creating any complication. There can be a hundred other measures, politically small and insignificant but nonetheless important and beneficial from the point of view of lessening of communal tension.

6. There is no need to reserve any quota for the Muslims to assure their entry into government service and other fields of public activity as the Indian Muslim conventions have been demanding from time to time. Nor is there any case for it except a communal one. There is, however, a good deal of justification for launching specific programmes of local development in the Muslim concentrated areas. The approach should be to create better employment and income opportunities for the poorer sections of the Muslim community without making religion one of the criteria for earning their livelihood. The employment policy may also be oriented to draw out the younger groups belonging to the Muslim middle class from areas like Aligarh where they are concentrated most, and disperse them in metropolitan towns and such other areas where the socio-economic life is more modern and liberal. Even here care should be taken to settle them in different areas of the town which may bring them in closer contact with the Hindus and other religious groups. This also holds true for the Hindus residing in such of those areas where Hindu communalism is growing.

7. Measures to fulfil the genuine demands of Indian Muslims are also necessary. Unfortunately, however, most of the demands made by the Indian Muslim Convention are such that they cannot be recommended for acceptance by the government on secular grounds or from the point of view of promoting better relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. A sympathetic view should, however, be taken in going through their demands and those which provide relief to them accepted provided they do not strengthen the hands of communal dogmatists or accentuate the problem of communal tension.

RANJIT GUPTA

# A new polity

SUGATA DASGUPTA

THIRTY years ago when three eminent socialists wrote about the communal question it was their contention that the great dilemma could be explained in terms of a simple triangle. Today, long after the base of the triangle is withdrawn and Hindus and Muslims have been left free to sort out their problems, the incompatibility has become all the more acute. It is evident therefore that the two parties who laid the blame on a third can no longer be absolved of the responsibility; the search for the cause and its remedy must

begin at home. The 'poser' recognises this position.

What it does not state categorically however is that the main factors responsible for the persistence of the communal problem in India are the growing chauvinism among a section of Hindus and the pattern of democracy we have opted for. The initial statement despite its Hindu overtone, supplies considerable data in support of this contention. Certain bitter truths that have accordingly been brought home are primarily for

the Hindus to take note of. Two of these are important. The first is that the Muslims have over the years become more demoralised and panicky; 'a herd of sheep' as the poser puts it, and that the animosity of Hindus towards this 'minority' has increased, may be—the assertion is mine—in direct proportion to their propensity to emerge as absolute 'tyrants'. What follows as a logical corollary to this reflex of the Hindu mind is that the endeavour is not only to subjugate the Muslims but also to 'aculturise' them in the process.

### Divided Loyalty

There is no doubt about the fact that the Indian Muslim today lies desolate and frustrated. His attitudes towards the State are still undecided and the Hindus are responsible for this indecision. For, despite the efforts of a large number of Muslims to look upon this country as their homeland, their kinship with those who live on the other side of the frontier keeps an internalised psychological pressure alive and the loyalty, as Gani Khan had once stated in his memorable article<sup>1</sup> lies divided between 'a concubine—that is Pakistan—and wife—that is India. If the wife had offered security, the concubine might have well been set aside. But this did not happen and the discomforts of the Muslim have only increased over the years.

The reasons for this are many although it is my contention that the main cause for the alienation of Muslims from the entity that is India, is a political one. It is true that social integration of the two communities, development of ties of kinship or for that matter growth of a common perceptual framework might have helped; but the basic question that the Muslims in India do not feel that they are 'equal' citizens of the State will have to be answered first.

This fear of unequal treatment was also responsible for the demand of Pakistan. For, as India had stepped on the threshold of nationhood with the intensification

of the struggle for independence, the fear of a 'caste' Hindu domination had become obvious. This was so for the simple reason that the caste Hindu, who had already emerged as the leader of the colonial society, had become the leader of politics too. Naturally he was most reluctant to share power with others.

The Congress movement which was supposed to be secular was likewise dominated by the ethos of Hinduism and this made it difficult for a self respecting Muslim to participate. 'Bande Mataram' a slogan of 'Muslim baiting' was its cry. The main-spring of the party lay in the hands of Hindus; communication media used by the Gandhian movement or the rituals of the terrorists and many other Left leaders were also overwhelmingly Hindu in form. The values and ideals of the freedom struggle which had inspired some of the statesmen of the time and the fact that political power was still nowhere in sight had of course substantially blunted the edge of this phenomenon. Muslims had however feared that once in power the Hindu would give up the mask of idealism and establish a monolithic rule in India where the Muslims would have to remain in eternal subservience.

### Hinduisation

This trend of 'Hinduisation' of the Indian polity had pained Gandhi a great deal and although he had quite unwittingly himself aided the process, a conviction had grown in him that no real independence could ever be achieved unless all and not merely a section of the population made the cause of independence their own. It was for this reason that Gandhi had joined the Khilafat movement, made Harijan uplift an indispensable part of his programme and, as the zero hour had struck, pleaded with Mountbatten to transfer power to Mohammed Ali Jinnah to prevent him from pressing for Pakistan.

It is common knowledge, however, that Gandhi's efforts for secularisation of the freedom struggle were always treated with scant

respect. The programme of hand-spinning despite Gandhi's great wishes remains confined even today to the ranks of the caste Hindu women and his endeavours for the liberation of the Harijan were all along dismissed as mere idealism, recognised as necessary for the spiritual development of the country but not for political stability.

### Complacency

If all these—the caste Hindu domination in the Congress Party and the total ethos of the freedom movement, its prayers, songs, evoking the name of Rama and the dream of *Ram Raj* had frightened away a large section of Muslims—led to the *Jehad* for Pakistan, let us not forget that quite a few of the Muslim leaders had yet stuck to the Congress and opted for a united India. It is strange however that not a single Hindu, barring the honourable exception of C. Rajagopalachari, had ever thought it fit even to consider that there could be a Muslim point of view and some element of truth in their possible fear of Hindu domination. It is this complacency of the majority community and the tendency to take all others for granted that continues to disturb Hindu-Muslim relations in India.

A study of the developments of those crucial days when 'power' was being transferred to Indian hands now makes interesting reading. One can possibly read today in between the lines and find it evident that both Gandhi and Jinnah were the most unhappy Indians at that time. While Gandhi had actively campaigned against partition, Jinnah was probably still waiting for the Congress to climb down and give him a 'veto' in Indian affairs. It is not my purpose to go into the merit of the issue as to whether it would have been proper to allow Jinnah a veto for the sake of the unity of India or whether Jinnah would have even then agreed to modify his tactics of brinkmanship. It seems evident however that the Hindu leaders were not committed to a united India if that had required them to share power with others.

1. Published on August 15, 1947 in 'India', Tulloch House, Appollo Bunder, Bombay.

Their eagerness to accede to Pakistan unless the Muslim League had agreed to the 'rule' of majority in India which at that time meant Hindu rule, made it evident that what the Hindu leaders wanted was unity only on their terms.

### Co-sharing

The idea of co-sharing thus seems anathema to the Hindu mind. It is for this reason that the 'grouping issue' proposed by the Cabinet Mission which would have reduced Hindus to a minority in a provincial zone, although they would have yet been in a majority at the Centre was not accepted. It is for this reason that the Hindus have again started talking of a special status for 'Jammu' in the event of 'Kashmir'—gaining a certain type of autonomy within the Indian Union. The fact that the Hindu had made up his mind to rule over the Muslim and not allow him any position of dominance even in a fraction of the Indian territory is thus evident today.

If it is the iron will for political domination that had led to the partition of India and forced the Muslim leaders to search for a different pasture for the satisfaction of their own ambitions, the situation has become worse confounded after partition. For one thing, there has been a distinct decline in idealism and a corresponding growth in 'Pan-Hinduism' in India.

Gandhi who had made 'Hindu Muslim Unity' the mission of his life was accordingly murdered after independence. The forces which killed the Mahatma have since then gained in political influence almost in the same proportion as Gandhi's influence has gone down. The death of Jawaharlal Nehru whose commitment to secularism was real dealt yet another blow. The emergence of new leaders whose concern with pragmatism is much greater than with ideals have now finally frustrated the Mussalman. For he knows that one cannot have, unless he is prepared to toe the Hindu line, any future in the politics of the country. And if Muslims fail in politics they are bound to fail in

the social and economic sectors as well.

The picture of the secular complex, at least so far as the present commentator is concerned, is now clear. The unrepentant politicisation of the communal posture by the majority was bound to drive a minority to despair and that is exactly what has happened in India. This edge of antagonism has become all the more sharp due to a number of political fantasies from which the leaders of the country have been suffering. These are three in number. The first is a universal 'minority' complex from which every section of our society including the Hindu suffers. Everybody in India, be he a Bengalee or a Tamilian, a northerner, a southerner, a 'Brahmin' or a 'Harijan', suffers from sporadic spasms of this complex. The cumulative impact of this creates wholly negative results. It leads to renewed political assertions and increases the determination of the Hindu zealously to guard his interests.

### Secular State

The other fantasy which has done great wrong to the communal question is the popular belief that a secular State has already been established in India. This too has led to a two-fold reaction. The first is the feeling created among a group of Hindus that the so-called professions of secularism only mean that the government is 'pro-Muslim' and 'anti-Hindu'. The sarcastic reaction of no less a person than Sardar Patel to Nehru's policy of secularism that 'the only nationalist Muslim left in India is Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru' and the Hindu resentment at the Hindu Code Bill reflect this mind.

The other is a self-complacency and feeling of righteousness, created by the profession of secularism, among the average Hindu that India has already become a 'secular' State and, since Pakistan is a theocratic society, if any Muslim in India complains of discrimination he is just being a plain traitor. The fact of the matter is otherwise. While India is yet quite a way removed from

the reality of secularism, Pakistan has become an Islamic State after the death of Jinnah and not 'theocratic', a theocratic State being one where the head of the religious institution also heads the government or vice versa. The difference between India and Pakistan is however that while 'Pakistan' consciously reduces the Hindu to a second class citizen, in India this happens despite the best efforts of the government. Had the well meaning secular minded Hindu in India been aware of this reality rather than of the mirage that a secular State has already been ushered in, the cause of secularism would have progressed further.

The Hindu ambition for absolute domination, the minority complex that smells resistance where there is none, the self-complacencies created by slogans of secularism—all these aggravate the situation. A slight raising of the brow, a faint nod of reassertion on the part of the Muslim then puts the 'majority', with its own persecution complex, to fright.

The Muslim reaction to this is of three types. While some of them have come to believe, out of sheer panic, that the best way to pull through is to be more loyal than the king and to behave as the Muslim 'Man Singh' in the durbar at Delhi, there are others who just withdraw into their shells. They live in closed societies, refuse to modernise their set-up—and feel, as a result, psychologically isolated and disorganised. The fact that they cannot be fully integrated either with India or with Pakistan hangs heavy on them and converts their frustration into an explosive social posture. Unable quite often to make a public demonstration of these feelings, the 'negatives' get internalised which further aggravates the pathological state.

### Imbalance

What creates a secular imbalance in India is now evident. The Hindu tilts the balance on his side and creates more often a deep feeling of political insecurity among the Muslims. It is difficult to say however that the Hindus, although they may well be respon-



sible for the imbalance, could be blamed for it. This brings us to the second part of our discussion, namely, the contribution of the political system to the problem as a whole. For, the British pattern of democracy, which vests political power in the hands of a majority naturally develops in the Hindu, the indestructible permanent majority in India, a power psychology and all the concomitants that go with it. The solution of the minority problem in India, therefore, lies in the evolution of a suitable political process, a new pattern of constitution and government where political power would truly belong to the people and all sections of it, rather than only to its one indestructible unit.

The democracy in India was patterned after the British system, notwithstanding the structural impediments of our society. Gandhi had however realised this inherent limitation of the 'traditional' structure of democracy which really gives only a few the opportunity to rule and reduces the rest of the people to 'passive' spectators. He had therefore wanted to bring in a two-fold amendment to the present system of government, namely, decentralisation of the foci of power, and substitution of 'majority' vote by the rule of 'consensus'. The latter would make, it was Gandhi's hope, every minority an equal co-sharer with the dominant group and would have given every State a veto and every group a say in the national affairs and made any scheme of secession forever unnecessary.

#### **Democratic Society**

What Gandhi had thus proposed in 1947 to bring a sense of security to an embittered minority is necessary all the more today not only to maintain a secular balance but to convert India into a truly democratic society. The structure thus recommended seems to be not only politically desirable but also sociologically functional. For, as Dr. M. N. Srinivas says, there is a dominant caste in every village of India which holds the string of control in the micro-society. In every State too there is a similar controlling group, an indestructible

religious majority that rules. It is evident therefore that if a group qualifies to wield absolute power mainly because it is in a majority—others will all along the line remain in the position of a minority. There were hopes in the early days of freedom that such a position would be controverted because of two reasons. The first, a miscalculation, was that the Indian society would be rapidly modernised and the 'indestructible' groups would soon give place to new alignments of ideological affiliations. The other factor whose importance was overrated is that the traditions of liberalism would prevent the 'majority' in India in exercising a monolithic control over the weak. But this, in reality, provides no safeguard. For, a democracy cannot be run on charity and it should be the inalienable right of every group to have a voice in the administration of the country.

#### **Reconstruction Needed**

What is required therefore is a new pattern of democracy—a different constitution and the structure of a new polity. What this structure will be in the new set-up is however difficult to say. Gandhi had provided, as has been mentioned before, a two fold formula, namely, voting by 'consensus' and 'decentralisation' of the political apparatus. Whether these two amendments are necessary or for that matter would be sufficient to meet the problem that confronts us could well form the subject matter of an intensive scrutiny. There is no doubt however that the system of political administration that we consider so sacrosanct has proved abortive and needs to be drastically amended.

The Hindu-Muslim question is thus a political problem. The sweep of a social renaissance or a psychological revolution may help in the matter; but to wait for these integrative forces to grow and not to settle the political problem in the meantime will not only be wishful thinking but a fatal blunder; one that may lead to a further vivisection of the country, if not on the communal question, on some others.

# The saviours

K. N. RAMACHANDRAN

THE term 'minority' could be defined as an aggregate of people in a given society, who are numerically small in number and are sometimes racially but invariably culturally and linguistically

different from the dominant group. This concept is of a comparatively recent origin. Since the minority question did not figure prominently till the end of the First World War, the induction of this term

into the vocabulary of politics did not take place earlier. In fact even the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of the twenties ignored the concept.

### Group Tension

However, in the Indian situation, when we speak of a minority in general terms, what is at the back of our minds is the Muslim community in India. In fact, the expression 'minority community' has become, in common parlance, a synonym for the Muslim community. This situation has come about because of the complex factors generated by a specific historical experience of the Indian sub-continent. It is also due to the fact that group tensions between, say, Hindus and Sikhs, or Hindus and Christians have remained low-voltage conflicts causing the minimum, if not no damage to the Indian social fabric. This discussion is primarily concerned with the Hindu-Muslim group tensions.

Theoretically speaking, although every type of inter-group conflict has its own distinct etiology, the socio-economic and political structure of a given society is the basic determinant of inter-group tensions. Thus, inter-group antagonisms are not the results of any clash of personality characteristics as some psychologists would like us to believe. In fact group conflicts are not inevitable if certain conditions, experiences, and prerequisites are absent.

In the Indian case, as noted earlier, the historical experience of the Mughal and the British periods has provided the dry timber for the stimulators to ignite inter-group conflicts: the tensions of today have their roots in the events of yesterday. The bugles of Islam first sounded in the land of the Hindus during the Arab conquest of Sind. The Hindu-Muslim encounter climaxed in the partition of India in 1947, when the British who had wrested the crown of Hindustan from the Mughals, parted with their imperial dominion.

The history of this period is full of events of varying complexities

and the scars which they have left behind on the *body-politic* of India still remains indelible. To what extent is the encounter itself responsible for the conflict situations? Conceding that all historical movements give rise to conflict situations, what was—and is—the role of intellectuals in particular and the dominant elite in general in conflict resolution? This question must impel the contemporary generation to take a peep, if not a plunge, into history in order to understand the content of this encounter and the various responses to it.

### Categorisation

By and large, the Hindus, who constitute the majority community, did not get at the kernel of the problem. They never made any genuine attempt to understand the Muslims. They always categorized them. The observers and historians of the dominant community, who have learnt their respective trades from our erstwhile masters, confined themselves to the narrow framework provided by the latter. According to their scenario, Islam is monotheistic, while the Hindu religion is pantheistic. Conversion to Islam is possible, but a Hindu is always born, never made. The record of Muslim and Mughal rule besides its splendid architectural achievements basically consists in the levy of oppressive tax on Hindus, subjugating them to forced conversion to Islam, and the desecration of their cultural edifices.

In general terms, the predominant characteristic of Islam is fanaticism. Many of these analysts of the past have made it appear that the Muslim community is seized by an uncontrollable instinct for pugnacity. They have even recorded the number of Hindus killed in specific battles, and the Hindu women dishonoured during the different campaigns of the Mughal rulers, although one is at a loss to understand how they managed to calculate the correct figures. Even the sophisticated Americans have admitted the

error of double-count with regard to the dead Viet Cong.

However, some of the events recorded and still being repeated *ad nauseum* are true. But a cardinal question has to be asked: are these events the content of Hindu-Muslim encounter or only lurid manifestations of a different phenomenon characteristic of all feudal ages? Are they the consequences or the causes themselves? The traditional historians and the articulate sections of the Hindu elite confuse cause with consequence. They provide the classic case of mistaking the trees for the wood.

However, to set the record straight, the Hindu-Muslim encounter of the past was a typical feudal phenomenon, of a strong Muslim authority striving to swallow the smaller ones. The rebellions of the Jats, the Marathas, and the Satnamis against the Mughals were not religious conflicts, although they assumed a religious form, but a conflict of socio-economic interests.

If the Mughals had fought only the Hindu kingdoms, the theory of Muslim fanaticism could be proved. In fact, the monstrous squandering of the Mughal exchequer in a vain attempt to subjugate the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan largely contributed to the undoing of Mughal authority. Even the destruction of the Hindu cultural symbols have nothing to do with Islamic fanaticism. The Romans, for example, did a similar thing, perhaps more thoroughly, in a period of expansion; and they were not known to be motivated by any religious fervour.

### The Elite's Failure

In short, the elite of the dominant community has failed to create an intellectual infrastructure to build up inter-group understanding and create an atmosphere for conflict resolution. Even today, after all the gory events of the recent past, there is a shocking apathy towards these questions, although some progress has been made possible by the dedication of some among the Hindu elite. In short, the demolition of questionable judgments

and value-arguments is urgently needed for the creation of a proper mental and moral climate—a necessary, if not the principal, prerequisite for finding an effective solution to group conflicts.

Yet another myth or delusion entertained by the dominant community is that communal tensions have their roots in the machinations of the British authority, who in their move to forestall any form of Indian national solidarity divided the Indian society. This kind of attitude is nothing but an attempt to shift the responsibility for the Hindu failure to someone else. In all fairness to our former rulers, it should be said that they did not create inter-group tensions, but only exploited what was already there. This kind of policy is a customary weapon of all imperialists and Britain only did what others have done, and still continue to do.

### Loss of Empire

As regards the Muslims, the dominant community, as noted earlier, did not attempt to understand the ethos of the Indian Muslims, particularly during the nationalist phase. The proud Muslims who had entertained illusions of permanence for their rule had undergone a swift process of disintegration under the British authority. The distributors of privilege and position were, as if by magic, reduced to the position of supplicants of the very favours they used to dispense. This traumatic experience of the sudden loss of an empire had a disturbing impact on the Muslims' psyche. In 1857 the last line of Mughal elite was destroyed. Leaderless, they looked around and found themselves a minority in a vast sea of Hindus. This realisation in times of adversity, besides promoting strong group identification in the community, built up what has now come to be called the fear complex. The dominant community let slip a historic opportunity at this juncture to initiate a meaningful dialogue for amity between groups. Instead of creating a sense of confidence among the Muslims, the Hindu leaders, either deliberately or inadvertently, deepened

their fear. Indian nationalism meant, by and large, Hindu nationalism. Even the great writers and poets of the dominant group represented only the quintessence of Hindu values and ignored some of the abiding qualities of Islamic culture.

### Muslim Isolation

Inevitably, the Muslims responded to the situation with greater group solidarity and increasingly isolated themselves from the mainstream of Indian life. To match Hindu nationalism they took recourse to pan-Islamic nationalism. The evils generated by the socio-economic causes gained a momentum of their own, and even Mahatma Gandhi's efforts to forge a common front against imperialism did not succeed. For, the table had already been laid for the vivisection of the subcontinent.

The horrors of partition are all too familiar, but it was believed that the end of the orgy would be followed by sanity. It was true to an extent and in the first few years of independent India there was a downward trend in inter-group conflicts, which was drastically reversed in 1964: the Ranchi, Meerut, Allahabad, and West Bengal incidents are only recent additions to the list of group conflicts.

In independent India the problem of majority-minority relations has been further complicated by the actions of Pakistan, which owing to certain compulsions is not averse to adding fuel to the fire whenever an opportunity offers itself. But, basically, what should be a matter of primary concern is the attitude of the dominant community in India which because of its very size has immense tension-producing potentialities. This is particularly so in the context of the emergence of Hindu communal parties on the Indian political scene. Hence the problem of resolution of group conflicts is to be viewed both on the level of politics and in individual terms.

Before analysing these questions it is necessary to understand the impact of this development on the

minority community, and the general minority attitudes. Firstly, any minority, whether Muslims or Jews, have some kind of a defensive mechanism operating in the group. The very consciousness that the given group is a minority accelerates the process of greater cohesion in the group. This factor has operated more effectively among the Indian Muslims because of specific historical circumstances.

Further, a minority is always more articulate about the wrongs done to it. And, sometimes, even minor mistakes of the dominant group are magnified to pose their demands more effectively. This kind of behaviour of a minority group could be explained in sociological terms. As some sociologists point out, no minority group in history has ever had the confidence of the dominant group and if they acquire that state of mind, then they cease to be minorities. The Indian Muslims are no exception to this general proposition.

Moreover, any aggressiveness on the part of the dominant group would make the minorities more insular and any attempts at assimilation would be made more difficult, if not completely futile. It is also likely that demonstration of communal attitudes on the part of the majority group will fortify the selective-exposure tendency characteristic of all minority communities. The community as a whole would more loudly assert that its beliefs and value systems are invulnerable and are valid for all time. As a consequence, the minority group would avoid all dissonant ideas, that is, the ideas which are opposed to the well-entrenched value-system and make intellectual progress in the group far more difficult than one could imagine.

### Reactionary Trend

Unfortunately, this trend has got hold of the Indian Muslims, largely as a reaction to the attitude of the dominant group towards them. Let us take the example of communal riots in India during 1967, and early 1968. The States where major communal tensions have occurred are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, West Ben-

gal and, for the first time in recent years, Maharashtra.

The total Hindu population of this area is approximately 17 crores and the Muslim population is nearly 3 crores. The Hindus outnumber the Muslims by nearly six to one. In the situation one can very well understand the anguish of the minority as well as some of its irrational manifestation. These are some of the factors that the majority community should take into consideration. As Laponce aptly remarked: 'Indeed, the problem of minorities is, more often than not, a problem of majorities'. The growth of Hindu political parties has further complicated the situation. Since the Indian democratic system permits only particular methods of tackling the problem, the combating of communalism on the political plane has become the urgent task of secular political parties of various ideological hues.

#### Communal Parties

In this context, two questions are often raised. The first is concerned with the character of communal parties of the dominant community and the second is related to the question of State action to contain the problems arising from conflict situations. While acknowledging without any reservation the dangers of majority communalism, one should also take into account the shallow foundation on which it rests. Communalism finds articulation through certain political parties and supposedly non-political organizations. Most of these political parties are populist in character and operate in a transitory situation for short-term political gains. They are not policy-oriented parties as their political behaviour has shown. They cannot for long hold the common man in a ration shop queue spellbound with empty sabre rattling oratory. They will be exposed if non-communal political parties correctly evaluate the objective conditions and act upon them.

Further, considering the fact that communal parties could cause

great damage in the short-run the need for strong State action becomes relevant. But State action is not a law and order problem as it is often made out to be. It is the evaluation of the specific causes that gives rise to conflicts and devising of both short-term and long-term policies to eliminate tensions. However, State action is only one of the weapons in combating group tensions. Although the effectiveness of State action cannot be minimised particularly in the context of preserving a minimum workable communal harmony, in the final analysis, there is no comparable substitute to doing away with ossified values and their replacement with new ones, befitting this age of technology.

However, one could only ignore at great peril the vast changes which have taken place in the dominant community. The process of modernization, a consequence of alien rule for more than two centuries, has stirred the group at least to question the attitude of supine acceptance of traditional values. Caste barriers, which preserved the traditional social stratification, are crashing to the ground although slowly. While there is a demonstration for a ban on cow slaughter, there is also a meeting organized to form the Hindu Beef-Eaters' Association. In short, the dominant community in India is undergoing a phase of transition. This is the other side of the coin, a significant point for the minority community to ponder over.

#### Secularism

This takes us to questions concerning the widely discussed palliative of secularism. Even the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* has provided more than one definition to the word. The concept has been defined both as a 'worldly' attitude and as scepticism towards religious truth and opposition to religious education. For instance, the adjective 'worldly' could be interpreted as materialistic and opposed to things spiritual. And opposition to religious education and scepticism towards religious truths

could convey the meaning of secularism as an agnostic or even an atheist concept, opposed to belief and faith.

Webster's *III International Dictionary* defines secularism 'as a system of social ethics based upon a doctrine that ethical standards and conduct should be determined exclusively with reference to the present life and social well being without reference to religion.' Thus, there is not a single acceptable definition. The late Jawaharlal Nehru who was a great exponent of this concept has again provided more than one attribute to 'secularism'. His usage suggests that what he meant by this concept was a scientific attitude. He also assigned the concept a prescriptive role.

#### Harmonious Co-existence

In the Indian context, secularism is designed to provide an agreeable environment for the harmonious coexistence of majority and minority communities. All these interpretations could be found in the literature on this problem. A definition of this expression in the Indian situation perhaps should contain both the attributes noted above. Thus, secularism is not just a political slogan as some have made it appear. Nor is it a condescending concession of the dominant community for the minorities to live in peace and security. It is a positive ideal which demands an exacting price from both the majority and the minorities.

Further, the threat to the formation of a healthy Indian social structure will not only be impeded by the obscurantism of the majority group which has no doubt a special responsibility to be modern, but also by the obscurantism of the minority. Besides these larger considerations, speaking in specific terms, modernization is a process that augurs well for the minorities themselves. Hence honest secularists, as different to those who trade in secularism, have the unenviable task of fighting obscurantism of both kinds.

But this course has its pitfalls too. The other day, a *Mullah*

remarked in a seminar that the Muslim community has a vested interest in the growth of secular attitudes in the dominant community because this will go a long way towards ensuring the preservation of what he called, 'Islamic Values'. The values that he implied are not different from what could be called traditional conservative Islamic attitudes. What he meant was that the secularism of the majority group would enable perpetuation of the *status quo* although it is not supposed to promote that end.

In other words, the secularization process in the dominant group would contribute to the continuance of the vested interests of the leaders and exploiting group of the Muslim community, to the great disadvantage of the poor Muslims. This perhaps explains the presence of some obscurantist Muslim leaders on Leftist platforms. Then how to go about the business of fighting minority obscurantism? If the secularists of the Hindu community, i.e., those who have a Hindu origin take up the task, besides the magnitude of the task itself—a technical point—they may perhaps pave the way to hell with good intentions. The vested interests of the minority group—whose hold on the Muslim masses should not be underestimated—would seize the opportunity to counter attack. They would raise the cry that the Hindus in the garb of secularism are attempting to destroy Islamic values.

#### **Change from Within**

This is being done in India today. Hence the movement for progress should come from within the minority community itself. There is no reason to believe that there are no progressive leaders in the minority group. But what is however significant is that any kind of majority communalism would weaken their case in their battle against the obscurantists. Further, although the effectiveness of State action in the modernising process cannot be denied, the State in its attitude to minorities can take progressive measures

only if an enlightened leadership of the minority group emerges.

Moreover, being a minority itself is an additional incentive for the community to modernize itself. There is need for a greater realisation of this fact among the Indian Muslims. And one need not be unduly perturbed about the so-called loss of values, as a result of modernization. In fact, as history has amply demonstrated, all modernized minorities have preserved their essential values intact: the Jews, for instance.

#### **Different Confrontation**

Lastly, assuming that the modernization process already released in the dominant group of India reaches its logical culmination, and the minority groups, particularly the Muslim community, does not respond to the impulses and stimuli of the same process, then the future portends a different kind of tension between the majority and the minority groups. It will be a confrontation between a modernized majority and a tradition-bound minority. The Chinese experience is rather relevant here. The tensions that were produced by some measures of the Chinese Government in Tibetan society are essentially the results of a confrontation between a revolutionized or modernized Han majority and a traditional Tibetan minority. Thus there is urgent need for progress at a faster pace in the Indian Muslim community.

It is the task of the socialising agents of both communities to widen their base in their respective groups and help in restructuring the existing social order, laws, and institutions. It is not the Hindu Law or the Muslim Law that will stand the test of time. There is no alternative to purposeful secular structures providing institutional guarantees. In the final analysis, they are the only saviours. What is called for is an induced shift in pre-established ends and a directed reorientation of value-systems. There is no sufficient realization of this fact at present. And if this kind of awareness is not deepened, then India's future, whether immediate or distant, is dark indeed!

# Modernization

RASHEEDUDDIN KHAN

THE Muslims in India are in a quandary. They appear lost and out-of-grips with the evolving reality of contemporary Indian political life. And this for many reasons. In terms of the immediate historical antecedents, their major political 'conditioning' is the ever-present memory of their

participation generally in the movement for the formation of a Muslim State in the sub-continent: Pakistan. In terms of the contemporary political situation, their basic problem is how to reconcile their sense of religious and communal belonging with their political identification with the national process of change in India, and thereby play a legitimate, and numerically proportionate, role in consonance with their collective status as the single biggest religious minority in the evolution of

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a modern federal and democratic all-India polity. This problem in its essence is not an isolated problem and the peculiar concern only of the Muslim community, but part of the larger political challenge facing India and its national policy of secularism and democracy. Therefore, any solution of lasting-value would have to bear the stamp of consensus of all, including that of the majority community.

### Mass Psychology

In order to comprehend the peculiar nature of Muslim politics and leadership in India, it might be worthwhile to begin by understanding certain typical aspects of the Muslim mass-psychology which, however irrational and illusory, nevertheless remains subjectively the frame of much of their responses and stimulation, of their actions and reactions. Muslim consciousness of superiority, indeed akin to the sentiments of *herrenvolk*, born out of the indelible memory of about 700 years of Muslim hegemony in the Indo-Gangetic plains and in many parts of the Deccan, is augmented in its separative aspect by the fact of their tenacious adherence to a faith, non-Indian in its origin and international in its character.

There is a realization that in democratic India, by the application of the principle of majority rule, the Muslims are condemned, so long as they retain their identity as Muslims, to the unenviable position of a perennial minority. This minority, in its numerical strength<sup>1</sup> is so big as to make it the third biggest Muslim population in the world and, what is more significant, in absolute terms it is an aggregate bigger in number than the populations severally of more than two-thirds States in the world. Yet, such a number, in the population-complex of India can never be more than a minority in the national context and, what is worse, due to the dispersal of its people in

the various federating States, the Muslim population everywhere has merely a marginal political value and significance. This article attempts to examine certain aspects of this problem a little deeper.

It is well established by facts that Pakistan, paradoxically, was created as a political entity, largely by the direct involvement of those Muslims who were living in provinces and States in pre-partition days in which they were in a minority and by that token continue to remain in India even after partition, away from their 'dream-land' which they had bequeathed ironically to their co-religionists who had always lived in provinces and States with a Muslim majority (or, at least, a parity with other communities) like the Bengalis, the Panjabis, the Sindhis and the Pathans. What is probably the worst irony of history is the realization, that they, the real creators of Pakistan and the proponents of the 'two-nation theory' should remain in India, by the exigencies of circumstances, despite their political triumph, only to suffer the consequences of their own logic and face the challenge of secularism and corporate multi-communal growth. Their political logic in pre-partition days ran something as follows:

### A Separate Nation

Muslims are a separate nation by all canons of recognition, but in a unified India they would be numerically subordinated, politically overruled and culturally overwhelmed by the Hindus, therefore, it is in the interest of the Muslims if India is divided and an exclusive Muslim State for the protection of the Muslims and the propagation of Islam is constituted.<sup>2</sup>

A bulk of the Muslims, who subscribed to this view, then, remained in India more by the compulsions of geography and the strong links of the existing socio-economic relationship, rather than by political choice. Nevertheless, it might not be overlooked that

there is another bulk of the Muslims, almost equal if not more in number, who were either powerless and bewildered spectators of the zealous 'two-nation' theory exponents, or weak but conscientious and uncompromising opponents, to whom the entire emotive reaction of the Muslim League leadership and its popular acclamation by a large bulk of the Muslim masses was one of the worst nightmares of their political experience. In this latter group were the Muslim 'nationalists', including a section of the *Ulema* and the enlightened gentry, on whom, consequent upon the formation of Pakistan, had fallen the responsibility of re-educating the Muslim masses to a sense of inter-communal harmony and realistic living in a secular polity.

Then, secondly, the proclamation of the Indian Republic, in the name of the people, whose liberty, equality and fraternity—irrespective of caste, creed and colour—was enshrined in the fundamental rights of the constitution and protected by an impartial, independent and supreme judiciary, has resulted in a new structuring of power-relationship in India. This has generated a process of secularization and democratic diffusion. All sections of the people, including the Muslims, are caught-up, as it were, in a vortex of change. The challenge is both wide in its magnitude and activist at all levels. The response from the various sections and groups of the people is unequal, dependent in its commitment and intensity, among other things, on that section's or group's receptivity to change, on its leadership-situation and on the stage of its socio-economic growth.

### Response to Change

The Muslim response is further limited by four particularistic considerations:

1. their adherence, as a community, to the traditional view of Muslim polity based on the common law of Islam (*Shariat*) and its *Corps Juris* (*Fiq'a*), thereby questioning (by inference) the total legitimacy of the legislative

1. See the discussion on this point in W. Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* New York: A Mentor 'Paperback', 257—263.

2. Cf. Smith, *Ibid.*, 268—274.



competence of the democratic law-making processes in India;

- ii. painful awareness of their minority-status and communal-cohesion, thus giving them a psychological reservation in committing themselves to the ideal of total identification to the nation;
- iii. fear of 'Hindu' domination, being indicative of their lack of confidence in their creative and contributory role in a competitive polity thereby making them resist the process of adjustment and integration;
- iv. lack of interest—and issue-orientation in their polarization and in their aggregative functions of politics, thus betraying a lag between their level of modernization and that of other communities in India.

#### Jurisprudence

Islam has a total world view. It is an inclusive religion with its own system of ethics, social norms, administrative directives, laws and institution.<sup>3</sup> These have emerged from, and are regulated by, the four basic sources of Islamic jurisprudence and doctrinal sanction, namely, *Quran* (the commandments of God), *Sunnat* (based on the *Hadith* or the traditions of the Prophet), *Qiyas* (analogical deduction based on reason), *Ijma* (consensus of the learned).<sup>4</sup> The *Shariat* is taken fundamentally as a doctrine of duties, a code of obligations.<sup>5</sup> It acknowledges five kinds of religious injunctions—*al ahkam al khamisa* (*Fard*: obligatory, *Haraam*: forbidden, *Mandub*: preferable, *Makruh*: reprehensible and *Jaiz*: permissible). Around the *Shariat* developed the vast body of *corpus-juris*; *Fiq*,

that is the law proper.<sup>6</sup> *Fiq* is thus the man-made codified case-law of Islam developed over the centuries, particularly between the first and the tenth century *Hijra* (corresponding to seventh to seventeenth century A.D.) by the four great *Imams*—Abu Hanifa (80-150 H; 699-766 A.D.), Malik Ibn Anas (97-179 H; 713-795 A.D.), Shafi (150-204 H; 767-820 A.D. and Ahmed Ibn Hanbal (164-241 H; 780-855 A.D.) and later for the next eight centuries by the great jurists—consults or *Muftis* based both on the *taqlid* (imitation) of the four *Imams* and on *ijtihad* (independent interpretation of law).<sup>7</sup>

#### Shariat's Prerogative

In India from the time of the Khiljis (that is, thirteenth century A.D.) if not earlier, and more particularly and firmly ever since the time of the Moghuls (sixteenth century onwards) and continuously during the ascendancy of the British East India Company (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) and even after the establishment of direct British rule (1858-1947), the *Shariat* remained the basis of Muslim personal law in the country. Strange as it will seem, the Muslim civil and criminal law continued to be administered also for all the Indian communities under the Company's protection or possession till 1772, when, with the promulgation of the famous Regulation II of the East India Company the Hindus came within the pale of Hindu law, but even then only for civil matters. Muslim Criminal Law remained in force for the generality of Indians till 1862, when after the promulgation of the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, it finally lapsed.

Similarly, the Muslim Law of Evidence also continued to be ap-

plied till the implementation of the British India Evidence Act of 1872. Since then, however, many Muslim laws are part of the Statute Book, particularly the Muslim law of Inheritance and Succession, wills, gifts, *waqfs* (religious endowments), marriage, divorce, dower, legitimacy and guardianship. These laws are derived from the two well-known texts of Muslim law in India, *Hidaya* and the *Fatawai-Alamgiri* which were compiled and codified in the time of Aurangzeb, the sixth Moghul Emperor (d. 1707). With the decline of the Moghul empire, a general stagnation had set in in Muslim society in India, whose *ulema* and *muftis* probably as part of the defence-mechanism against the British Raj and later against the fear of Hindu domination, hesitated to develop, modify and adjust in practice the Muslim law. On the contrary they took an orthodox and *status quo* position. Being mindful of the religious susceptibilities of the Muslims, the British also treated the question of Muslim law as a 'hornet's nest', so that their Lordships of the Privy Council continued to uphold the codified law embodied in the *Hidaya* and *Fatawai Alamgiri* as the only authentic and undeviating *corpus juris* for the Muslims in India, with the result that, as Fyzee points out, new rules of law could not have been deduced by Muslim jurists of eminence.<sup>8</sup>

This position of Muslim law in India in the context of the continuous process of codification and amendments made in the Muslim law particularly during the last hundred years—preceding half a century in Turkey and Egypt (the two models of modernized Muslim States)—appears most unsatisfactory and stagnant.<sup>9</sup>

#### Dar-us-Salam and Dar-ul-Harab

Linked close to the problem of Muslim adherence (emotionally, if

3. Cf. Donald E. Smith, *India as a Secular State* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963) 36-41.

4. See: Muhammad Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State* (Hyderabad: Government Press, 1942) 11-12 and Asaf A.A. Fyzee, *An Introduction to the Study of Mahomedan Law* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931) 20-21.

5. Fyzee, n. 4, 20-21.

6. *Fiq*, literally intelligence, hence its juristic meaning: interpretative exercise of intelligence, Fyzee, n. 4, 22.

7. See: Hamidullah & Fyzee n. 3, and H.B. Sharabi, *Governments and Politics of the Middle East in the 20th Century* (New York: Van Nostrand Co. 1962) 11-12 citing the authorities of Ibn Taimiya, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina and Farabi on the role of *Ijtihad*.

8. Fyzee, n. 4, 40.

9. Cf. Sharabi, n. 7, 16 commenting on the causes for the decline of Muslim intellec-

not always in practice) to the *Shariat*, is the question of the determination of a State as *Dar-us-Salam* or *Dar-ul-Harab*. In its doctrinal simplicity all countries according to the traditional Muslims' theological view can be divided into two broad categories:

- i. *Dar-us-Salam* (the land of peace) where the *Shariat* law operates substantively if not completely, and hence is either a fully Muslim State, or, by inference, a quasi-Muslim State;
- ii. *Dar-ul-Harab* (the land of strife) the enemy territory, that is the land of antagonistic non-Muslim sovereignty.<sup>10</sup>

But it is instructive to note that this 'duality' was made flexible by the *ulema* particularly in relation to the determination of the doctrinal status of British Raj in India.<sup>11</sup> The *ulema* held, to summarize their subtleties of argument, that the British rule in India could neither be categorized as *Dar-us-Salam* nor as *Dar-ul-Harab* (which then would have automatically enjoined on the Muslims the obligations of conducting *Jihad* (religious war) but as *Dar-ul-Aman* (a land of basic religious liberties and security) where *Aman-i-awwal* (primary liberties, i.e., security of person, property and faith) is guaranteed.<sup>12</sup>

### Indian Situation

The point to be decided by the traditionalist Muslims in India

tualism in West Asia (Middle East) says: "One may say the remaining vitality in Islamic intellectual activity faded in the 18th century with the rise of the Ottoman Empire, the center, defender and guardian of orthodox Islam. Under the Ottomans, *ijtihad*, the 'door to independent reasoning' on problems of the *Sharia* was definitely closed and *taqlid*, reasoning according to established precedents and interpretations, became the basic principle of legal procedure." See also: Donald E. Smith, n. 3., 420-423, and also 30-40.

10. See W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Muslims* (Calcutta: Comrade Publishers, 1945) 118-119, wherein he has enlisted the 3 conditions under which a country can be called *Dar-ul-Harab* according to the Indian Muslim *Fiqh*.

11. *Ibid.*, 117-137.

12. *Ibid.*, 132

today is whether substantially the same situation as during the British Raj, with regard to their laws continues or not? If it does, then the Republic of India, is at least a *Dar-ul-Aman*, if not in essence a quasi *Dar-us-Salam*. Even from a doctrinal angle it cannot be argued that with its secular orientation, the modern Indian State is any less a land of '*Aman-i-awwal*' than the British Raj in India was with its professedly Christian and imperial character. It is reasonable therefore to maintain that 'India is a country which is neither ruled by the Muslims nor hostile to Islam . . . (and) the Muslims are still governed by their sacred *Shariat*'.<sup>13</sup> The *Jamiat-ul-Ulema* had given a theological basis for Muslim political participation in the nationalist movement and in secular India by propounding the concept of *mu'ahadah* (social contract). 'Their thesis is that the Muslims and non-Muslims have entered upon a mutual contract in India . . . to establish a secular State. 'The Constitution of India, which the Muslim community's elected representatives unanimously supported and to which they swore allegiance, represents the *mu'ahadah*'.<sup>14</sup>

### Zakir Husain's View

In new India, the 55 million Muslims, comprising about 10 per cent of the population are faced with a doctrinally new and socially radical situation. It may be stated in the words of a leading Muslim leader, the President of the Republic, Dr. Zakir Husain. Clinching the basic political challenge facing the community he said: 'In the past the Muslims had been either the rulers or the ruled, today in India they are co-rulers as joint sharers of national sovereignty'.<sup>15</sup> As an analogy it can

13. Donald E. Smith, n. 3, 421. He has cited Prof. Muejeb's statement: "Wherever there is a believing Muslim, there is *Dar-ul-Islam*". (423). This however is an idealistic position. Cf. also the hesitation expressed by Jawaharlal Nehru, on the reasons for introducing a uniform civil code in India (290).

14. Smith, n. 1, 285-286.

15. Sentiments like these had been expressed earlier as well by leaders of eminence

be said that the problem before Indian Muslims on the national scale is identical to the basic problem of international living itself, namely, that of co-existence *inter-se*, on a level of mutuality and reciprocity with other groups and sections of the people, united on the fundamentals of common objectives like democracy, secularism and the pursuit of socio-economic justice.

### Emotional Impediments

But in effecting this reorientation the Muslims would have to transcend two interdependent emotional impediments, namely, their negative awareness of minority-status and their attachment to communal consciousness. Yet, in fairness it is to be realized that both these emotional conditions are based on objective reality. Nevertheless, the task before the Muslims is precisely to transform the negative and disabling aspect of this objective reality into a positive and creative aspect. The survival of the Muslims as a contributory and creative group in the federal Indian polity, would indeed be largely determined by their success in this process of transforming a negative emotion, into a positive impulse.

But, let us first understand the problem as it now exists. Numerically the Muslims *vis-a-vis* the Hindus are a minority. Accepting the basic fact of the immobility between religious groups, this situation involving the respective immutable communal equation between the Hindus and the Muslims would continue. Therefore, unless modernization leads fast to the collapse of traditional cohesion based on caste and creed, the Muslims as an entity would have to reconcile themselves to the position of a perpetual minority. But this situation, even if taken in its static context, need not appear quite so tragic. On the contrary it might be remembered that 'religious minorities have played a significant role in the evolution of

like Maulana Azad, Cf. Smith, n. 1, 264 also 284-289 and Sisir Gupta, "Moslems in Indian Politics, 1947-60," *India Quarterly*, New Delhi, 18 : 4 (October-December 1962) 359.

the secular state in the west'.<sup>16</sup> And, further, it is to be realized that in addition to their distinctive cultural contribution, 'religious minorities are the natural guardians of the secular State'.

Therefore, the Muslim despair over their minority-status need not be overplayed. Firstly, a minority so big and culturally so impressive like the Muslims in India, with centuries of composite history and composite traditions behind it cannot but be creative and dominant if only its leaders play a positive and uninhibited role. Secondly, in a secular democracy itself in a process of modernization, like India, the operational categories would inevitably change, and with it a new political culture of India would emerge. That pattern of new political culture would relegate to the background the role of communal groups and would supplant it by interest-oriented groups, which, in the nature of things, would have to be multi-communal in their composition, corporate in their demands, composite in their outlook and issue-oriented in their politics.

#### Communal Consciousness

Now let us examine the implication of what is called communal consciousness. 'The term 'community', as used in India', writes Richard Lambert, 'is one of those conveniently vague words so helpful in the designation of heterogeneous social units...The adjectival form 'communal' is one of the most negatively weighted terms in the Indian political vocabulary. It is used to describe an organization that seeks to promote the interests of a section of the population presumably to the detriment of the society as a whole, or in the name of religion or tradition opposes a social change...It is thus an epithet implying anti-social greed and reactionary social outlook...'<sup>17</sup>

It was possibly in this sense that Panikkar said that 'the organisation of Islam in India was

therefore, frankly communal (because) the Muslims at all time everywhere have been an integrated community separate from others'.<sup>18</sup> But are not the other minority communities equally if not more integrated 'at all times'? Further will it be correct to maintain that Muslim communalism is a sort of parallel nationalism or should we hold that it is basically, even if an exaggerated, form of sub-nationalism, an 'in-group' feeling, a cohesive religious affinity awareness.

#### Role of Religion

Before answering these queries, we have to recapitulate the all-pervading role of religion in India during its long history. It is by now well-established by facts that religion, as a socio-cultural pattern and as the basis of ethical norms and metaphysical speculations, has been the most powerful single factor in India.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, in such a religion-dominated country, possessing today a plural society, comprising diversified religious, linguistic, ethnic and cultural groupings, it is but natural that homogeneous entities consisting of just one religion, language, race or culture would exist based on narrow, yet not ultimately on divisive loyalties.

Since the majority community is bound to be the first beneficiary of nationalism<sup>20</sup> in a democratic

society, therefore the minorities in order to retain their identity depend not merely on the promotion of nationalism but also on the simultaneous and contemporaneous development of sub-nationalism, which in the conditions of today in India takes a negative slant and degenerates into communalism.<sup>21</sup> The single biggest reason for this probably is the fact that as a form of primordial cohesion between people belonging to the same religious-group, 'communalism is often a reaction to the fear of domination of the majority community'.<sup>22</sup>

It was largely this sense of fear that aggravated Muslim consciousness of communalism, which now for almost a century has become a basic factor in Hindu-Muslim politics, making it psychologically difficult for both the communities to discard it.<sup>23</sup> At the base, however, lies the problem that community feeling, as an exclusive and sacrosanct feeling, does militate against the process of total national identification covering the entirety of communities and groups.

#### Process of Adjustment

The minority-status of the Muslims in India became further complicated and painfully stressed by the communally-oriented section of the majority community) as a consequence of the formation of Pakistan. The total number and proportion of the Muslims in the population-complex of India has dwindled and as a community their political allegiance has been questioned, their economic and social status has declined, unemployment has spread and generally during the last 20 years they have lived groping for light. The process of adjustment is made difficult due to many factors. Firstly, there is the community's own lack of confidence in its

munal Groups in Indian Politics" in Richard L. Park & Irene Tinker — *Leadership & Political Institutions in India* (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1960) 211. Cf. Myron Weiner, *Party Politics in India* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957) 164 and Alfred De Grazia, *The Elements of Political Science* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1952) 10.

18. K. M. Panikkar, *The Foundations of New India* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1963) 55 Cf. W. Cantwell Smith *Modern Islam in India* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1943) 185.

19. Donald E. Smith, n. 3, VII.

20. Cf. Donald E. Smith, n. 3, 27 says: "Hinduism is an ethnic religion, the faith of one particular people rather than an international religion. India is the only home of the Hindus... An Ethnic religion may easily become closely identified with nationalism... The promotion of national ideals by the state thus tends to become the promotion of religion. This poses a more subtle challenge to the secular state."

21. Cf. A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1954) 346. He says that Indian Muslims are neither a nation nor a monolith social stratum.

22. Lambert, n. 17, 219.

23. Of. Sisir Gupta, n. 15, 364.

16. Donald E. Smith, n. 3, 405.

17. Richard D. Lambert, "Hindu Com-

creative and positive role in a competitive polity. Secondly, is the resistance offered by sections of the majority community due not only to their fear of the Muslim minority's reassertion for another form of separatism within India, but probably due also to the fact of the severe competition and rivalry generated in all facets of national life by the working of 'the politics of scarcity'?<sup>24</sup>

#### Irrational Fear

Then there is in the mind of the common Muslim the long established irrational fear injected by interested parties, that the 'final goal' of Hinduism is the assimilation leading up to the annihilation of Islam in India. In this they are reminded of two sets of historical analogies—the fate of Buddhists and Jainists in India who were either persecuted or assimilated within the fold of Brahmanical Hinduism during 1,000 years of encounter, and the fate of their own co-religionists, the Muslims in Spain, who were totally exterminated by the Christians after about 700 years of Moorish-Arab rule; and a similar fate of the Muslims in Greece and in the Danubian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, who were liquidated after the reconquest of these regions by the Christian power.

In reflecting on these analogies, one is probably to keep in mind that analogies generally, and those of history particularly, are to be accepted with great caution and after much scrutiny. There are few enemies of logic more formidable than analogies. The unconscious assumption that given a similarity of factors occurrences in history would be largely identical, overlook the vital factors of time, sequence and causality, which changes—and changes sometimes qualitatively—the very framework of circumstances, thus rendering any inference based alone on analogy of history, obsolete and conjectural.

What happened to Buddhism and Jainism depended on factors which

are not identical to the situational-combine of modern Islam in India. Then, even superficially, the three religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, being based on the *Vedas* and originating in India, are to be treated apart. The nature of Buddhism and Jainism was historically in the form of a revolt against certain social customs of the Hindus like caste, and against certain vested-interests like Brahmanical hegemony. The bigoted phase of Brahmanical revival during seventh and ninth centuries A.D. has roots clearly in the problems of traditional Indian polity. Therefore, this analogy for purposes of Hindu-Muslim relations in contemporary times is thoroughly inept.

#### Inappropriate Analogy

Regarding the analogy of the extermination of Muslims from Spain or other parts of Europe, it will be germane to consider the history of the constant militant relationship of Islam and Christianity in the context of the power-position obtaining in medieval Europe and the Middle East. The proselytizing and missionary character, of both Islam and Christianity gave a radically different type of mutuality-pattern to their relationships in history. The non-proselytizing and essentially accommodative and secular attitude of Hinduism needs emphasis. As a religion, Hinduism is too amorphous and non-established in its nature to inspire a crusading zeal for any length of time as Christianity, Islam or Hinayana Buddhism are capable of doing even today. In its long history Hinduism had been free of the 'orthodoxy and heresy', duality and, therefore, generally also free of the 'inquisition' and 'persecution' mania (except for a brief period during the vigorous Brahmanical revival during the Gupta Age).

The major default in proper Muslim response to the demands of change can be attributed to the lack of interest-orientation and issue-specificity in modern Muslim politics in India. This is more glaring in the background of substantial advances made by the

majority community. Reasons for this can be traced basically to the lag between the Hindus and the Muslims in terms of the growth of an educated middle-class, the rise of the mercantile and entrepreneur bourgeoisie, the spread of western education and technology, the extent and range of share in the 'benefits' and 'opportunities' provided by new India, and the development of a positive and modernistic frame of ideas.<sup>25</sup> In each of these counts the Hindus have an edge over the Muslims.

In this connection it is relevant to remember the role of British imperial policy which was based deliberately on widening the gulf between the two major communities and thus driving a wedge in the evolution of a unified Indian national movement. The Muslims were the worst hit by this policy. Linked with this was the failure of the national leadership, particularly after the healthy phase of Hindu-Muslim unity, built so spontaneously between 1916-1928 (the Congress-Khilafat collaboration for instance) despite the earlier attempts at separation (1905-1911), to push forward the national movement on the solid foundations of communal harmony. With the result that at the time of gaining national independence in 1947, Hindus and Muslims stood on unequal levels of growth and unequal degrees of modernization.

#### Retarding Factors

Following the formation of a free government in India after the partition of the country, the process of modernization for the Muslims was checked by three limiting factors:

(1) A mass exodus of the well-to-do Muslims to Pakistan took place between 1947-50 thus depriving the community of its middle-class and entrepreneur elite, resulting in the severe depletion of its commercial, bureaucratic and vocational leadership cadre.

(2) The unavoidable effects of the 'democratic' legislations like land-reforms, extension of universal

24. Myron Weiner, *The Politics of Scarcity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

25. See Desai, n. 21, 347.

franchise and the introduction of the Panchayati-Raj resulted, ironically in hitting the Muslims hard. Their landlords—forming a hard-core of those Muslims who remained back in India because as middle-rich they were tied to their lands—were dispossessed by the implementation of the land-reforms; their masses as members of a minority community were inevitably drowned in the pool of universality of suffrage; their earlier privileged position as members of the higher and middle-classes was lost by the introduction of democratic decentralization.

### Diversification

(3) With the operation of the Panchayati-Raj and the spread of the community development and national extension schemes, the process of diversification of Indian politics has entered a new phase. A new elite is coming up at the local and slowly even at the State level with roots in the peasantry and in the country-side. This is part of a wider democratic change, long overdue in the rural hinterland. As a result an army of rural elite has emerged which has challenged urban ascendancy in Indian politics and has threatened, if not partly also dislodged, them from their position of privileges and power monopoly. With this development those communities whose traditional political base has been urban—like the Muslims—have been relegated to a secondary position. Though it should be immediately juxtaposed here that as an offshoot of this development, the 'less-community-oriented' Muslim grass-root leadership in the rural areas is also emerging as part of a composite multi-communal growth. This new Muslim rural leadership is not so conscious of its Islamic belonging as of its everyday life problems of economy and social reconstruction and of the necessity of corporate participation.

The task before the Muslims then is to transcend the limitations of community-orientation. For this they will have to evolve a form

- a. of emotional identification and political integration;

- b. of participation and contribution in the process of modernization; and

- c. of playing the leading role as the exponents of secularism and nationalism.

For the realisation of the first objective it would be necessary to reconcile the needless dichotomy between religion and country. 'To be Muslim' is not antagonistic to 'to be Indian'. It is merely a question of the proper ordering and determination of the spheres of loyalties. A sense of belonging to India, without compromising a sense of adherence to Islam is obviously possible, except if the controversies of modern politics are projected into Islam, or the differences of faiths are confused as the differences of nationalities. As a matter of fact, an *Indian Muslim* is precisely, in that order, an *Indian* first and a *Muslim* next in his sociological, cultural, psychological, and economic and political responses and conditions. Only in terms of faith he is Muslim first and Muslim last, but that is not the concern of the profane problems of politics or secular aspects of social living. The divergence between him and a member of another community in his region within India is that of degree but not of kind while the difference between him and his co-religionists elsewhere in the world—say in Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Nigeria or Albania—is essentially a basic difference in kind. Muslim leadership in India ought to stress this point to undo the effect of tendentious propaganda to the contrary.

### Political Integration

Political integration does not and ought not to mean cultural integration or cultural subordination. It means closer unity for political purposes in a heterogeneous country and plural society like India. Political integration emphasises corporate development. In this sense alone the call to national integration has a democratic content. Otherwise, if national integration is stretched to domains of culture, faith, language, ideological heritage and matters

generally outside political culture and economy, then it might betray an authoritarian pattern of regimentation. Healthy regionalism, autonomy of cultures, free development of languages, liberties of social organization are the very life-blood of a federal democratic polity. This the majority—communal and political—more than the minorities ought to remember.

Taking advantage of the constitutional possibilities and the establishment of the process of democracy and change, the Muslim leadership at all levels should encourage their co-religionists to discard their separatist tendencies and enter the arena of competitive polity and its composite problems so as to accelerate the pace of modernization. Even otherwise this process is on, through urbanization, industrial growth, the unfolding of the non-denominational educational system, the spread of trade unions and co-operatives and several other activities of common concern. Faster industrialization, greater diversification of interest, and more democracy will itself break old relationships based on caste and religious communities.

### Challenge and Opportunity

Minorities with a creative background are bound to play a leading role in the promotion of secularism for the obvious and basic reason of shifting the focus from the religious majority's overlordship. They have also been in history in many countries the torch-bearers of nationalism and change. This is true for instance of the Christian Arabs, who since the middle of the nineteenth century have been the intellectual pioneers of the Arab nationalist movement. In India, the Muslim elite has a challenge and an opportunity to play this positive role. The active, constructive and non-sectional participation of the Muslims in the diversified fields of changing civilization in India, would not only give an interest-orientation to their own politics but also a firm stability to the federal polity of new India, in the building of which our generation has a tryst with destiny.

# Framework of politics

GOPAL KRISHNA

NO plural society has been able to solve entirely satisfactorily the problem of integrating its constituent elements, or even of adjusting their mutual relations in such a way as to safeguard their individual identities while promoting the degree of cohesion necessary for the viability of a composite society. Few societies contain as many pluralities as does our own, and the task of creating social cohesion here is rendered formidable by the legacy of our recent past as well as by the stresses of rapid change. The processes of social, economic and political change that have been at work for over a century have had the dual effect of consolidating the constituent parts while loosening the framework of the composite society.

The communal problem of India in its essentials stems from the fact that the confrontation between Hinduism and Islam resulted in a stalemate. Percival Spear has pointed out that to European travellers visiting India during the Mughal period the Indian situation appeared comparable to that of the Roman empire in the early years of Christianity: though numerically few at that time, the Christians were destined to convert the Roman empire to the new religion; similarly Islam, especially as it was the religion of the rulers, was considered likely in due course to overwhelm the Hindu majority.<sup>1</sup> The confrontation proved inconclusive and the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of movements seeking the re-

generation of Hinduism and of Islam along parallel lines. In the process the basic issues which have dominated Indian public life since the mutiny were formulated, even before organised political movements emerged during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The communal movement in India has above all been the movement of Muslims from the Hindu-majority areas of the Indian sub-continent. It is not an accident that communal sentiment—fear of the Hindu majority and the search for safeguards, including separate electorates, the reservation of seats and later parity in legislative and executive spheres—arose first in north India, and the separatist movement had its principal centres of activity in the Hindu-majority provinces of the north. Historical memories, or rather the popular notions of what happened in history, exercise far greater influence on contemporary outlook and emotions than is generally believed and they have been the basis of the communal politics of modern India.

It was a central thesis of some major Indian Muslim thinkers that India could not be a nation and that the doctrine of nationalism itself was evil because it threatened the unity of the Muslim community which, in theory, transcended territorial and racial divisions. Iqbal opposed the doctrine of territorial nationalism and Maulana Mohammed Ali held that India had to be a 'federation of faiths' rather than a nation-State. While denying the applicability of the idea of nationhood to India, they, and before them Sir Syed

1. T. G. P. Spear, 'The Position of the Muslims, Before and After Partition', *India and Ceylon, Unity and Diversity*, Edited by Philip Mason, Oxford University Press, London, 1967, P.31.

Ahmed Khan, rejected the idea of democracy based on equal citizenship, they believed that adult franchise could not be an acceptable political basis for a plural society because of the inevitable threat it would pose to minorities.

#### Nationalist Muslims' View

The nationalist Muslim leaders, pre-eminent among them Maulana Azad, believed that territorial nationalism was not in conflict with the idea of the community of the believers and that Muslims could be active partners with members of the other religious communities in the construction and operation of a political system that assured equal citizenship to all. This approach was rejected by the great majority of the Muslim community. (By a twist of history the political, as distinct from religious, opponents of nationalism became the advocates of a separate State for Indian Muslims). Finally the efforts of nearly half a century devoted to working out a generally acceptable system ended in the disaster of partition, above all a disaster for the present Indian Muslim community.

This brief review of recent history is relevant for understanding the present state of the communal problem, for the conflicts which led the Indian leaders to accept partition as a solution remain unresolved.

It is clear that the Muslim community has not recovered from the trauma of partition. The more important question, however, is whether there has been a significant change in its view of its place in the emerging nation.

The framework of secular democracy makes Muslims co-citizens instead of rulers or subjects as in the past. The response of the community to this situation has been hesitant and, in some respects, negative. It is to be seen most sharply in the manner of its participation, or lack of it, in the political process, and especially in the character of the Muslim organisations which have developed since independence, and the candidates and parties supported

by the Muslim electorate over the past sixteen years.

The dominant fear of the Muslim community in the post-independence period has been for the very existence of Islam in India. The sharply defined character of the community and its association with others with the guilt of partition made it an obvious target for attack from Hindu communalism. Its loss of political power as a result of partition exposed it to possible pressures from political authority. Consequently, the major preoccupation of Muslim leadership has been to sustain Muslims in their faith and to preserve the internal coherence of the community. The same factors have led them also to oppose the reform of Muslim personal law and to seek, increasingly, independent instruments of political action.

#### Sectarian Organisations

Professor W. C. Smith in a perceptive essay on 'The Ulema in Indian Politics'<sup>2</sup> has noted that the *Ulema* emerge as the custodians of the community when its political power is greatly diminished or totally destroyed. In such situations there is a tendency for Muslims to turn from worldly to religious preoccupations. That something like this has happened to Indian Muslims after independence seems very likely. The evidence for such a hypothesis, in the form of the sectarian organisations which have flourished since 1947, is substantial. Here I should mention the two most important among them: the Tablighi Jamaat and the Jamaat-e-Islami.

The Tablighi Jamaat, founded in 1941 by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas, characteristically a Maulana from a small town in Muzaffarnagar district in U.P. and belonging to the Deoband school of thought, puts its emphasis on fostering religious observances among Muslims. It sends deputations of missionaries from place to

place to sustain and strengthen the believers in the practice of their religion through regular recitation of the *Kalimah*, offering *Namaz*, daily reading of the holy *Quran* and acts of charity. The movement, is widespread and draws its following mainly from the lower strata of Muslim society.

The Jamaat-e-Islami, founded by Maulana Maududi, also in 1941, is better known on account of its semi-political activities, its widespread organisation and its many journals through which it propagates its militant sectarianism. The Jamaat believes that religious communities should be separately organised for political purposes and that this is the means to communal harmony; it prefers that Muslims should live as a protected community in a Hindu State rather than that they should be partners in the development of a secular polity. In this the Jamaat sees both the safety of the Muslim community and its survival as a coherent entity. It is interesting to note that while the Jamaat-e-Islami has flourished over the past two decades, the more nationalistically oriented Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind has declined.

#### Post-independence Trends

In the immediate post-independence period, the general tendency was for Muslims to withdraw from politics for fear of becoming targets of Hindu hostility. The advice given to Muslims by one of the *Ulema* in 1950 was to keep away from politics.<sup>3</sup> The Muslim League ceased to operate in the greater part of the Indian Union and the Congress Party emerged as the natural instrument for the participation of Muslims in the new political process by virtue of being the ruling party and also because of its commitment to freedom of religion.

Muslim participation in politics has increased over the years, but their political preferences seem to have undergone a profound change. The following table shows the number of seats contested by

2. W.C. Smith, 'The Ulema in Indian Politics', *Politics and Society in India*, Edited by C. H. Philips, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1963, pp. 39-51.

3. See H. E. Hassnain, *Indian Muslims*, Lalvani Publishing House, Bombay, 1968, p. 35.



TABLE 1

Year	Lok Sabha		State Assemblies *	
	No. of seats contested	Number of candidates	No. of seats contested.	Number of candidates.
1952	35	42	416	617
1957	46	61	387	520
1962	83	130	494	743
1967	93	127	552	892

\* excluding Jammu and Kashmir

Muslim candidates in the four general elections:

Among the Muslims elected to the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies those belonging to the Congress constituted the vast majority in the first, second and the third general elections; the pattern has radically changed in the fourth. The table below gives the details.

TABLE 2  
Number of Muslims elected on Congress tickets

Year	Lok Sabha	State Assemblies*
1952	17	142
1957	16	130
1962	17	112
1967	8	57

\* excluding Jammu and Kashmir.

Between 1962 and 1967, a very remarkable change has obviously taken place, reflected in a serious decline in the capacity of Congress Muslim nominees to get elected to legislative bodies. Whether this is part of the general decline of the Congress Party's electoral support witnessed in the fourth general election or whether it has lost support particularly among the Muslim electorate is hard to say from available data. But the loss of votes by Congress Muslim candidates is undeniable. In the northern States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, which account for more than half the Muslim population in the country, the decline of the support for Congress Muslim candidates is very large indeed as can be seen from Table 3.

The fourth general election witnessed a greater diversification of electoral support to Muslim

TABLE 3

Votes received by Congress Muslim candidates as a percentage of the total valid votes polled by all Muslim candidates in the elections to the State Legislative Assemblies

State	1952	1957	1962	1967
Bihar	63.62	65.01	51.83	39.02
Uttar Pradesh	72.09	57.97	47.27	35.93
West Bengal	56.10	50.63	51.75	47.11
INDIA	57.12	58.62	52.27	40.44

TABLE 4

Muslim Candidates elected to

Parties	Lok Sabha	State Assemblies *
Congress	8	57
CPI & CPI (M)	2	18
PSP & SSP	1	12
Swatantra	3	9
Other parties	—	14
Independents	6	29

\* excluding Jammu and Kashmir.

candidates according to party affiliation, as is shown in Table 4.

These results must in part be due to the increasing disenchantment of the politically active Muslims with the Congress Party, an organisational expression of which was found in the formation of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat at Lucknow in 1964 by Dr. Syed Mahmud, former Union Minister, and representatives of the Muslim League, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat. The principal objective of the Mushawarat was to unite Indian Muslims for political action to protect their common interests. It has been alleged that the Mushawarat has been brought under the control of the Jamaat-e-Islami and some substance is lent to this by the reported resignation of Dr. Syed Mahmud from the Presidency of the organisation on account of differences over the question of extending support to the Congress Party.<sup>4</sup>

The extent to which the change in the electoral preferences of Muslims has been caused by the activities of the Mushawarat is hard to determine, but the emergence of Independents as a major category of Muslim politicians, commanding over a quarter of the electoral support secured by all Muslim candidates, is a significant indicator of the shift in the Muslim political outlook in recent years.

The political situation of the Muslim community is extremely delicate because of the nature of

4. *The Statesman*, April 22, 1968.



the choice placed before it. Its tradition, based on an integrated view of political, social and personal life, all subsumed under religion, has been to accord legitimacy only to a pronouncedly communal standpoint. Even a Congress MLA from Madras protested in 1964 that 'under the present system of joint electorate, Hindu society has no opportunity to get to know the real mind of the Muslim community because most of the Muslims whom they have adopted in the secular party have naturally got to be considered as show boys of the majority community. (They are) those who by flattering the powers that be got into good positions to betray both the Hindu and Muslim communities instead of bringing relations closer together... There is no political party of the Muslim community in this country excepting the Muslim League...'<sup>5</sup>

#### Monolithic Entity

The need to provide the community with acceptable representatives and at the same time to prevent the political fragmentation of the Muslim electorate has led the Jamaat-e-Islami to foster the idea that Muslims must operate as a monolithic entity in the political life of the country. This approach proceeds from the assumption that material safety and political influence for Muslims can be assured only by building up communal solidarity, and from the fear that if Muslims were to exercise individual choice in the selection of their representatives or to attach themselves to avowedly secular parties, the community itself would disintegrate.

The increasing number of communal riots and the widespread belief that authority is either biased against the Muslims or is too inefficient to protect their lives and property have won support for this view among some sections of Muslim opinion. But the return to full-scale communal

politics which this approach implies rests on a misunderstanding: there is no evidence that a plural outlook in politics will tend to undermine the religious unity of the community. It must also be noted that it presupposes a degree of internal homogeneity which the community clearly does not possess; although far better integrated than the Hindus, it is very diverse in composition, reflecting differences of history, geography and culture.

#### North Indian Communalism

The aggressive communal spirit characteristic of north Indian Muslim society is not to be found either in the west or in the south of India nor do the animosities over the language issue which have excited passions in north India since the 1870s find their echoes in those parts of the country where Urdu is not the common language of the Muslim population. The processes of social and economic change are tending to make the community, like other similarly placed groups, more differentiated than ever before and it is to be expected that the political choices made by individual Muslims would, in the absence of pressure for solidarity, reflect the increasing social differentiation within the community.

The active controversies dominating current debate on the Muslim situation show how seriously issues such as the role of religion in public and personal life or the character of the associations permissible for a Muslim in a non-Muslim State are being pondered over by the community. Because of their particular situation—a relatively backward defensive minority—Indian Muslims are slow to experience the retreat of religion to the private sphere and its abdication as a factor determining political affiliations as these processes have occurred in other societies, and this secularisation of their political outlook is being further retarded by the recent growth of Hindu communalism. But, the democratic political process is likely to hasten such an outcome in spite of current tendencies in the opposite direction.

5. Cited by Theodore P. Wright, Jr., 'The Effectiveness of Muslim Representation in India', *South Asian Politics and Religion*, Edited by Donald E. Smith, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J. 1966, p. 119.

# Tasks ahead

DANIAL LATIFI

IN the first decade of the Indian Republic, the statistics of communal rioting and bloodshed annually declined and fell to a figure of

only 26 incidents reported in 1960. This was despite the fact that opinion in India was exercised by such facts as the Pak-U.S. pact,

the UN Security Council Resolution on Kashmir of January 26, 1957, and reports of oppression of the Hindu minority in Pakistan.

The striking upward trend of such rioting and bloodshed in the second decade of the Republic is therefore ominous.

The Kerala mid-term elections of 1960 were in many ways a watershed. The ambiguous attitude of the Congress national leadership to the Muslim League (whose association, in opposition, was accepted but, *in office*, spurned) set up a chain reaction exacerbating both Hindu and Muslim communalism throughout India. In a single year the figures of communal incidents nearly quadrupled and rose to 92 for the year 1961.

#### Sino-Pak Alliance

The rapprochement between Pakistan and China, beginning with the Sino-Pak border settlement of August 1962, brought about a complex psychological reaction in India. The anger and apprehension aroused by this development was somehow aimed at the Indian Muslims. This was further exaggerated by China's show of military strength and nuclear armament. But the exemplary performance of Indian Muslims (as of other minorities) in the Indo-Pak war of 1965 did help to soothe passions and with a single exception no communal incident was reported during the war.

Unfortunately, however, latent feelings of suspicion and hostility revived some time later. The economic depression following the new emphasis on defence spending after 1962 (necessitated by the hostile confrontation with China and Pakistan) has been a factor intensifying communal tension and riots. This has been further aggravated by the food crisis (now, happily, apparently receding) and by the burdensome back-log of debt servicing.

In contrast with the absence of communal incidents during the Indo-Pak war period of 1965, the figure rose to 133 in 1966. In 1967 it further went up to 209, making

the number of persons killed in communal riots as many as the total figures for the nine years 1954-1962 (both inclusive).

A feature of the present situation is that while parties like the Jana Sangh and the R.S.S. thrive openly on communal incitement in many places the threat to communal peace comes equally from parties whose 'secularism' cannot resist the temptation of occasional communal adventures for some immediate election advantage.

Some of the most perturbing manifestations of communal riots have been in the heavy industrial areas like Jamshedpur, Rourkela and Ranchi. It is sad that organised labour, which was required to act as the national fire brigade in putting down the flames of communal strife, seems to have proved ineffective, at least for the present, in maintaining unity even in areas of working class concentration.

#### Exchange of Population

An aggressive phase of communal incitement has appeared in recent years around the so-called 'exchange of population' slogan. The forty-eighth session of the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha held at Sholapur, Maharashtra, (May 14-17, 1964) adopted a resolution on this topic. First dealing with the persecution of the Hindu minority in Pakistan (whom it referred to as 'an integral part of the Hindu Nation'), it called for all the Pakistani Hindus being brought to India for rehabilitation and re-settlement here, particularly in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and the Andamans.

The resolution went on to demand that, 'both for rehabilitation of refugees and for permanently solving the communal problem and for breaking the vicious circle of communal riots in India and Pakistan, exchange of Hindu population from Pakistan with the Muslim population of India should be brought about in a peaceful manner . . . to begin with, the Muslim population from Assam, Bengal and Tripura should

be exchanged with the Hindu population in Pakistan.'<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the provocation to the minorities in Pakistan, it is clear that the above proposal would be no solution to their problem. The resolution merely treats minorities, whether Hindu (in Pakistan) or Muslim (in India), like cattle to be disposed off by the governments concerned, irrespective of their wishes in the matter.

It is no service to the Hindus in Pakistan to claim them as an integral part of the Hindu nation. This can only prejudice their status there for, there are in Pakistan courageous and high principled Hindus who prefer to suffer humiliation, persecution and even death in their own homeland rather than seek asylum in India for 'rehabilitation'. Similarly, there are in India Muslims who are resolved to live and die and be buried here and face any consequences rather than migrate to another country howsoever inviting.

The authors of the resolution forget that stubborn human sentiment—the love for one's native soil. 'The wild berries of my birth place taste sweeter than the fruits of Paradise', the Urdu poet sang. They also fail to grasp that any suggestion to drive out a section of Indian citizens to a foreign country is a grave offence against our Republic.

#### Allegiance and Protection

Ever since the dawn of history and the birth of States, *allegiance* and *protection* have been reciprocal. 'Allegiance is the tie, or *ligament*, which binds the subject to the king, in return for that protection which the king affords the subject,' wrote Blackstone. (*Commentaries*, Vol. I. p. 366). Dissolution of this tie between the subject and the ruler, or between the citizen and the Republic, leads to the liquidation of the State.

The theory of the 'precarious citizenship' of Indian Muslims

1. See the pamphlet entitled, *Mahasabha's Stand on Exchange of Population* published by the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha, Mandir Marg, New Delhi August 14, 1964.

necessarily involves their release from unqualified allegiance to the Republic. A more mischievous, subversive and treasonable doctrine can scarcely be conceived, and it is all the more sinister because it provides the ideological justification for communal riots. It is a lacuna in the administration of our penal law that such disparagement of the citizenship rights of any citizen of India should go unpunished.

### Pakistani Hindus

Without saying that the 'Hindus of Pakistan are an integral part of the Hindu Nation', it cannot be denied that due to the deep and manifold ties between the two countries, the people of India are bound to feel profound concern for the welfare of the minorities in Pakistan. It is well known that communal riots occurred in East Pakistan in January 1964 in Khulna, Jessore and Dacca, in which the Hindu minority suffered grievously in life and property. Incidents of this type from Pakistan have not been reported subsequently.

Despite the absence of such reports, in April 1968, the columnist of a leading Indian chain newspaper was able to maintain that, 'Riots in India take place occasioned either by Pakistani agents in India or by a chain reaction caused by pogroms of non-Muslims in Pakistan.' He explained the absence of reports of such 'pogroms' by asserting that, the 'Pakistani Press does not publish or is not allowed to publish such happenings.'<sup>2</sup> Adherents of this point of view assert that the absence of reports of communal incidents in Pakistan after 1964 betokens a situation even graver than before. This, according to them, is the silence of congealed terror if not of the grave.<sup>3</sup>

Far fetched as such views might seem to some, they receive mass

circulation and credence, adding fuel to the communal fire. It is, therefore, in the mutual interests of the two countries and, even more, of their unfortunate minorities, that the truth about these matters should be impartially and authoritatively ascertained and publicised.

India should therefore ask the United Nations, under Articles 55(C), 59 and 68 of the Charter 3 to appoint a permanent Minorities Commission, composed of friendly countries acceptable to both India and Pakistan, with full powers to inspect and report from time to time on the status and condition of the minorities in Pakistan. As a token of our own *bona fides* we should accept similar inspection regarding the minorities in India.<sup>4</sup>

Pakistan, particularly, should welcome this if, as its official spokesmen claim, the past disturbances of 1964 were adequately repressed and have not been repeated. The currency of allegations to the contrary manifestly injures Pakistan's image.

### Responsibility for Partition

To attribute the evil of partition of India solely to the Indian Muslims goes contrary to historical fact. Others were no less responsible, as Leonard Mosely has

demonstrated in his book, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (Jaico, Bombay, 1965). According to him, until the very end, Abul Kalam Azad alone amongst the top leaders held fast to the ideal of unitary India.<sup>5</sup> A day may yet come when the peoples of India and Pakistan, Hindu and Muslim might fittingly acknowledge the vision and statesmanship of that Indian Muslim.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad used to say that the development of society in India as elsewhere would inevitably lead to an emphasis on the division of the population horizontally into classes, cutting across vertical barriers of religious groups. Perhaps in this, as in other matters, he will prove right.

A demand is voiced in some quarters for Indian Muslims to sever their links with Pakistan in order to gain the confidence of their Hindu brethren. Such a demand overlooks the fact that many centuries of common history and ties of blood unite the peoples of this sub-continent. Political divisions, temporary or permanent, cannot alter ethnography. Indian Muslims (like Pakistani Hindus) are destined yet to play an important and noble role in the rapprochement, reconciliation and consensual consortium of India and Pakistan which all thoughtful persons consider ultimately inevitable. This role they should not, at any cost, surrender.

### Muslim Identity

To fulfil their historic role, Indian Muslims, even at the risk of being misunderstood by some, must retain their identity. This involves preserving their culture and institutions which should be reformed to keep abreast of the times.

The Muslim family law comes under frequent attack. It is forgotten that many of the recent reforms in other systems of family law have long been featured in the Muslim law. These are,

4. Article 55 (c) With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, United Nations shall promote: universal respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

Article 59. The Organisations shall, where appropriate, initiate negotiations among the States concerned for the creation of any new specialised agencies required for the accomplishment of the purposes set forth in Article 55.

Article 68. The Economic and Social Council shall set up commission in economic and social fields and for the promotion of human rights, and such other commissions as may be required for the performance of its functions. (See also Articles 1(3); 13(1)(b) and 14)

5. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 87-8, 276.

2. See *Indian Express*, New Delhi, April 3, 1968.

3. See *Indian Express*, New Delhi, April 3, 15, 20 and 27, 1968.

among others: the wife's right to a legal personality apart from her husband, with full capacity to hold property and enter into contracts; the wife's right to continue to belong to her father's (as distinct from her husband's) family after marriage and her right to inheritance from her parents; the wife's right to a marriage settlement from her husband as an essential condition of marriage; the wife's right to custody of her infant children in the event of break-up of the marriage; the woman's right to remarry after widowhood or divorce. Divorce by mutual consent is also an old concept of Muslim law now being adopted by others. The Muslim marriage is a civil and secular transaction requiring no priest, involving no religious rite. The secular concept of marriage prevails in most modern societies.

#### Family Law

Muslim family law also requires certain changes about which I have written elsewhere. These changes are those that Muslim society itself requires. In particular it is necessary to give full statutory force to the injunction: 'Unto those women that are divorced a reasonable provision is due.' (*Quran* II. 241).

Muslims should continue their own best traditions by further enlarging and safeguarding the rights and status of women. Such reforms do not mean the adoption by the Muslims of the Hindu code. Indeed the Hindu conception of marriage as a sacrament cannot be reconciled with Muslim institutions. The Hindu code does not extend to any of the other minorities such as Christians and Parsis and the suggestion that it can be extended to Muslims is misconceived. The ultimate convergence of Indian social institutions will require a synthesis of cultures and not a uniformity imposed by a single tradition upon all others.

It is unfortunate that a trend has developed in some quarters to denigrate the Muslim contribution to Indian history and civilisation. This contribution appears in such diverse fields as law, social reform

administration, political integration, communications, language, agriculture, medicine, gastrology, architecture, literature, music and the arts. This trend of denigration has had an overall negative effect on Indian intellectual growth, hindered national integration and fostered communalism.<sup>6</sup>

We are also afflicted by the effects of an illegitimate historical science which has succeeded in persuading many of our countrymen that their ancestors were 'liberated' by the British from centuries of Muslim oppression and intolerance. Such 'history' fails to explain how so many centuries of Muslim intolerance left the greatest concentrations of Hindus at the centres of Muslim rule (around Delhi and Agra, for example) with the greatest concentrations of Muslims at the periphery (areas that now form Pakistan).

Although Urdu is not the language of the Muslims (since many non-Muslims have eminently contributed to it and since many Muslims, for example those from the south, don't speak it) the sectarian approach of some elements to the language question has widened on the one hand the rift between Hindus and Muslims and, on the other hand, between Indians from the north and south.

#### Cow Protection

Another plank of communal incitement which has again come up is the old slogan of cow protection. In the disposal of surplus cattle, the Muslims as such have no interest other than economic (which they share with society at large). This slogan has however been made an excuse for anti-Muslim incitement. In this connection one may recall Mahatma Gandhi's words:

'The Hindu religion prohibits cow-slaughter for the Hindus, not for the world. The religious prohibition comes from within. Any imposition from without means compulsion. Such com-

pulsion is repugnant to religion. India is the land not only of the Hindus, but also of the Mussalmans; the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians and the Jews and all who claim to be Indian and are loyal to the Indian Union. If they can prohibit cow slaughter in India on religious grounds, why cannot the Pakistan Government prohibit, say, idol worship in Pakistan on similar grounds? I am not a temple-goer, but if I were prohibited from going to a temple in Pakistan, I would make it a point to go there even at the risk of losing my head. Just as the *Shariat* cannot be imposed on the non-Muslims, the Hindu law cannot be imposed on the non-Hindus.'

#### Aligarh University

A remarkable instance of minority baiting has been the propaganda carried on in some quarters against the Aligarh Muslim University. As the official Chatterji Enquiry Committee Report of 1961 pointed out regarding Aligarh, 'rumours of the wildest character, which have not the slightest evidence in their support are readily accepted . . . the denial of such rumours is not always immediately possible nor does it carry conviction to minds already prejudiced.'

The Indian Muslims, as an educationally backward group, should, instead of being criticised, be encouraged to help themselves in educational advancement. Whatever can be said against Aligarh, it always maintained a liberal policy in admitting non-Muslim students. As long ago as 1882, the parent institution of the present University, the M.A.O. College had on its rolls 57 Hindu and some Christian and Parsi students. These formed nearly one fourth of its then total of 259 students. This ratio of non-Muslim students was maintained before independence and has increased to one-third after independence. Aligarh has also employed many non-Muslim teachers.

I am told by a non-Muslim Aligarh old boy that despite occa-

6. See, M. N. Roy: *Historical Role of Islam* and Tara Chand: *Impact of Islam on Indian Culture*.

sional efforts (for example in 1961) by some outside elements to do propaganda on communal lines for Muslim candidates in the University Union elections, the general attitude of the Muslim students and staff towards non-Muslims was uniformly fraternal and free from communalism. In this regard Aligarh compares favourably with many other denominational foundations in the country.

So long as denominational institutions form part of our educational landscape—there is a Hindu University at Banaras and there are many Hindu colleges and schools throughout India; there are also Christian and Sikh colleges and schools—it is difficult to appreciate the reason for this institution being singled out for such polemics.

#### Left Inclinations

Under these pressures, it is not surprising that large sections of the Indian Muslims, including some from conservative traditions, are increasingly turning towards radical ideology, today typified by communism. As already mentioned a large proportion of Indian Muslims are industrial workers and artisans. The latter are the most tenacious in their religious beliefs. However, even the religious minded are now earnestly seeking a reconciliation of Islamic belief with communist ideology (such as was the nightmare of British rulers). The late Maulana Hasrat Mohani, in an earlier generation, represented this trend. Despite his religious convictions he was yet able to preside over the first Congress of the Communist Party of India in 1921.

According to Maulana Hasrat Mohani, the term 'Muslim' (which literally means 'one who submits') corresponds to the Marxist philosophical concept, that, 'Freedom is the recognition of Necessity'. The Marxist concept of 'necessity', the Maulana said, was only another name for the Islamic concept of *Divine Will*. A factor influencing Muslim opinion is that both the wings of the Communist Party have in official resolutions unequivocally condemned the Jana

Sangh and the R.S.S. for their leading role in communal incitement. Other parties have so far failed to commit themselves in this matter although Mrs. Indira Gandhi in some of her election speeches has gone some way to do so.

The Muslim landslide is not all towards the Left. Some frightened Muslims—demoralised by the failure of the secular parties to protect them; confused by the hesitation of the Congress even to name the Jana Sangh and R.S.S. as responsible for the riots; emasculated, intellectually and morally, by a dogmatic and sterile understanding of Islam; mistrusting themselves and their future—have sought collaboration with the R.S.S. and the Jana Sangh.

Some describe this as 'a policy of realism'. Actually it is a rude attempt to save their skins; perhaps also to gain some temporary advantages for individuals. Policies of craven appeasement have never succeeded in history. If this trend prevails, darkness will enshroud the minds and souls of Indian Muslims. Their future will be fraught with ignominy and disaster. When they finally go down, nothing will perish that is not already dead.

#### Intellectual Ferment

But this trend is under heavy fire from the intellectuals, from the youth, from the artisans and workers and above all from the splendidly awakening women.

There is an unprecedented intellectual and emotional ferment among the Indian Muslims. Whither it will lead it is yet too early to say. But certain immediate steps need to be undertaken if this ferment is to be channelled properly.

(1) The organised working class movement, which in recent years has held aloof from this task, must come forward to assume its rightful role of leadership in the task of combating communal riots and cliques.

(2) Our intelligentsia must, in the tradition of Rabindranath

Tagore and others, reconcile, and lead our people with the inspiration of authentic vision.

(3) Education must be tully secularised and oriented for inculcating mutual respect and appreciation of their respective historical traditions among all Indians.

(4) Scientific education must be vigorously promoted and obscurantism combated.

(5) The administration, including the Magistracy and the Police, must be raised in morale and status correspondingly with its social responsibility. Its independence and terms of service must be enhanced and improved.

(6) Dedicated political and administrative cadres must be trained, free of communal virus.

(7) The mass news media must be brought under democratic social control.

(8) The security of life and property on railways, national highways, ports and airports must be a Union responsibility.

#### Constitutional Provisions

(9) Constitutional and legal rights should be given to every occupier effectively to defend his dwelling house against any intruder whatsoever (including a police officer without warrant). Similar protection should extend to workplaces and places of worship.

(10) Penalties for racial and religious hate-incitement should be made more severe; to impugn directly or indirectly, the citizenship rights of any Indian citizen, on any grounds whatsoever, should be heavily penalised.

11. Section 9 of the Citizenship Act (making loss of citizenship subject to executive determination) must be repealed.

12. Sections 123(3-A) and 125 of the Representation of the People Act 1951 should be elaborated specifically to penalise disparagement of:

- (a) the loyalty or citizenship; or
- (b) the eating habits or birth,

death or marriage customs;  
or

- (c) the traditional heroes, saints or prophets, of any group or community as corrupt practices and electoral offences. The Election Commission should be given powers and machinery to enforce these sections which are at present almost a dead letter.

#### Minorities' Share

13. A temporary scaffolding of norms and conventions should be erected to secure to Muslims and other minorities fairplay and due participation in the political, administrative and economic life of the nation. This would also help to disperse undue concentrations of power in the hands of particular closed groups, which is a feature of the present scramble.

14. Steps should be taken to disperse undue concentrations of industrial, commercial and financial power in the hands of restricted groups who exploit their power for sectarian ends.

15. India should ask the United Nations under Articles 55(c), 59 and 68 of the Charter to appoint a permanent international vigilance commission to watch the status and condition of minorities in Pakistan. As a token of our own *bona fides* India should offer to submit to similar inspection the status and conditions of minorities in India. The Commission should consist of representatives of friendly countries acceptable to both India and Pakistan.

16. Septic foci of communal incitement and exceptionalism must be identified, isolated and confronted with all the healthy forces of the nation.

17. Statute should provide that no female shall be competent to change her religion until she attains the age of 30 years. This would check female 'conversions' (often colourable), for matrimonial purposes, which sometimes causes communal friction.

18. Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure should be amended to empower the central

government throughout India permanently to prohibit within 50 metres of notified places of religious worship processions or gatherings of antagonistic religious denominations or persons.

19. The concept of Asian and African solidarity must be revived to broaden our domestic perspectives.

Some say that our present troubles stem from the fact that Muslims refuse to forget that they once ruled this country. Others say that these difficulties flow from the fact that some Hindus have not yet forgotten that they were, for long, ruled by Muslims. Such reasoning ignores the setting of the twentieth century and the character of Republican institutions to which we, as a nation, are committed.

We have established for ourselves the ideal of a government of *laws* and not of *men*. In the world at large the days of sacerdotal government are over, even though, in some countries, religious styles are retained.

#### Commitment to Future

All Indians should take to heart the words of Marcus Garvey:

'There is no sense in hate; it comes back to you; therefore, make your history so laudable, magnificent and untarnished that another generation will not seek to repay your seed for the sins inflicted upon their fathers.'

Indian Muslims must stand firm in the face of all trials. They dwell in India by right of birth. They stand on soil mingled with the dust of their ancestors. There is nothing higher or nobler than their ambition to live along with their families as unimpugned free and equal citizens on this land of their fathers. Indian Muslims must seek this right for all their fellow countrymen. Particularly they must champion the weaker minorities and the down-trodden. They must whole-heartedly commit themselves to the future: to the cause of secularism and human advancement; to the cause of the labouring millions of town and country.

# Books

**HINDUSTANI MUSLIM SIYASAT** By K. M. Ashraf.  
Nai Roshni Prakashan, New Delhi, 1963.

**INDIAN MUSLIMS: CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY**  
By S. E. Hassnain.  
Lalvani Publishing House, Bombay, 1968.

At the present juncture of our new political era, whether we like it or not, there is much to complain about even by the largest minority group in the

country—the Muslims. Nothing probably could be more dangerous for a group of people than a sense of insecurity in the land of their birth. And the occurrence of innumerable communal disturbances for inexplicable reasons throughout the country which ultimately result in organised mass killing of Muslims is enough to shatter the confidence of many a brave soul. The threat is not only to one's cultural pattern or social norms; what is at stake is the survival of an important minority and something



has to be done soon to prevent the situation from assuming a more monstrous character.

That the authority has failed miserably to curb communal trends is too obvious to deserve any emphasis. But the matter should not end here. What is required now is a self-appraisal by Muslims of their own behaviour pattern in an independent India. Have they tried to meet the challenge in an effective manner? What efforts, if any, have been made by themselves to take the community out of the present rut? In fact the community is guided by a large number of vested interests and consequently even in the face of extreme political and economic crisis, any self-consolidation has not been possible (even though it should not be concluded that self-consolidation could have provided the proper answer to the new challenge). The internal dissensions and intra-community group rivalries and the obvious corollary of virtually no contact with other communities have been due mainly to their adherence to orthodoxy which very often leads one to obscurantism. The real enemy of Muslim progress is, therefore, orthodoxy.

It is unfortunate that the leadership of Muslims even now lies with the orthodox *ulema* and *maulvis* who have hardly any modern perspective of life: while the situation demands some revolutionary social changes, the destiny of Muslims is supposed to be shaped in the dark corridors of Deoband and whatever remains of Firangi Mahal and several other such centres of obscurantism. As a result, the community has been left to operate from what a mathematician would describe as the third coordinate of national politics. If the community remains backward and fails to get educated according to the needs of the hour, no one would be benefited more than the orthodox leaders whose hopes lie only in obscurantism.

An example of what may be the likely sordid outcomes of these trends is provided by the current debate in the orthodox Muslim press about the pros and cons of family planning. While no sane individual could ignore the good results that this important national campaign should be expected to yield, some well-known ideologues of the orthodox set have described the practice of family planning as un-Islamic thereby exhorting their followers not to be led into this 'irreligious' trap of the national policy formulators.<sup>1</sup> Such things could only confirm the anti-Muslim prejudices existing in many quarters. To take another example, Arabs have to be supported by almost all Muslims not on the basis

1. See *Al-Furqan*, vol. 35, nos. 10-12 and vol. 36, no. 1, Feb-Apr, 1968. Ateeq-ur-Rehman Sambhali, a noted *Alim*, wrote two long articles opposing family planning in the ideological journal with a wide circulation. The debate continues in almost all important Urdu newspapers and journals with the overwhelming majority of anti-family planning columnists dominating the scene.

of just causes or the validity of their stand against the Israelis in the present confrontation, but because the predominant Arab population is Muslim.

The need in the existing circumstances is of a bold generation of intellectuals as well as political workers with considerable mass base, to rise and call the bluff of our out-dated *maulvis* and *ulema*. Historians and scholars of Indian Muslim affairs have so far failed to take a bold line. The failure has to be admitted irrespective of the bulky volumes given to us by scholars like M. Mu'jeeb and S. Abid Husain of what is often described as a dispassionate history of Indian Muslims. They have to be outspoken about our old timers instead of giving them a clean chit of 'nationalism' and 'anti-British' achievements.

K. M. Ashraf has been one of our more forward looking historians. In his brief survey of Indian Muslim politics, he has focused the misleading lines of argument of leaders of groups like the Jammāt-e-Islami. He has surveyed the advent of progressivism among Muslims. Among the first anti-feudal voices, according to him, were those of the great poet, Asadullah Khan Ghalib, Syed Ahmed Khan and Khwaja Altaf Husain Hali.

Ghalib thought that even though the British were responsible for the eclipse of the Mughal empire, they had given their countrymen a unique light through education and scientific enquiry. This, according to Ashraf, could be considered as the progressivism of that age. Syed Ahmed Khan was associated with some feudal and pro-British movements. But on the question of the world Islamic movements, he took a stand which could be described as differing from pro-imperialist thought.

Hali, according to Ashraf, was the leader of the early progressives for he was the first to realise (and made no bones about) the fact that all that was seen in the world in the shape of development and human progress was the result of the toil of the masses. Iqbal too showed some new light by inspiring 'the world's poor' and giving the country a definite movement whose torch was carried forward by progressive intellectuals like Faiz Ahmed Faiz and others.

S. E. Hassnain's book is at best an apology for the Congress Party for its failure to come to the rescue of Muslims in independent India's administration. His main target of attack are the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat. He has often come out scathingly against the *maulvis* and *ulema* of the Jamaat and Mushawarat varieties. But what makes his study obviously subjective and full of misplaced emphases is the fact that he carefully avoids the anti-progressive role of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema which for

all practical purposes forms the Muslim cadre for the Congress. For the reactionary trends among Muslims, all orthodox leaders are to be blamed equally and not only those who, in the small and vested-interest-politics, happen to be on the wrong side.

In his enthusiasm for 'nationalism' Hassnain tries to involve unconnected matters in his discussion of Muslim grievances and takes to task those Muslims who do not go out of their way to express their loyalty to the government's Kashmir policy, for instance. One may ask why support to the official Kashmir policy is to be considered a test of loyalty for the Muslims? And why, at all, is any such test needed? To say even that what is at stake in Kashmir is a constitutional provision for Urdu is meaningless. It would be absurd to suggest that the Constitution lists Urdu as one of the national languages simply because it is the official language of Kashmir.

Such suggestions could probably go down with the readers of *Urdu Times* which Hassnain is said to be editing from Bombay and whose disjointed and unedited articles form this book. But when the readership is to be expanded, as is the case with the book under review, something more logical, more convincing and more authoritative is expected. Hassnain fails to provide this for obvious reasons.

Even A. B. Shah, in his foreword to Hassnain's book misfires when he makes the statement: 'Under the Jana Sangh, Muslims may expect to enjoy the status of a protected minority; under communism they will not have even that'. Shah's argument seems ridiculous in view of the examples of performance of the communist administration in Kerala and the considerably Left oriented set-up in Madras on the one hand and the Jana Sangh dominated governments in U.P., Madhya Pradesh and Bihar till recently, on the other. While Muslims in Kerala and Madras are living in peace, those in the last three States have been continuously agonised by one communal factor or the other.

It is distortions of Muslim polity by conservatives like Hassnain and Shah that is putting a reverse gear to the community's likely march ahead and preventing it from coming out of what we described earlier as the third coordinate politics. A long battle has to be fought in the existing atmosphere of obscurantism of a country where even the head of the State chose to touch the feet of a Shankaracharya as one of his early acts after coming into office.

Anees Chishti

**THE INDIAN MUSLIMS** By M. Mujeeb.  
George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1967.

In his book, *The Continent of Circe*, Nirad Chaudhuri has written: 'Whenever in the streets of Delhi

I see a Muslim woman in a *Burqa*, the Islamic veil, I apostrophize her mentally: 'Sister! you are the symbol of your community in India.' The entire body of the Muslims are under a black veil. Professor Mujeeb, in his book, *The Indian Muslims*, has made a significant effort to lift that veil.

He has tried to deal, in as comprehensive a fashion as possible, with the entire thousand year history of the Indian Muslim community. He has divided his book into three parts covering, what he calls, the early, the middle and the modern periods. The early period deals with roughly the period of the Delhi Sultanate, the middle period encompasses the heyday of Mughal rule up to the death of Aurangzeb and the modern deals with the last decades of Mughal rule, the entire period of British rule and the few years since independence.

To quote the author himself, 'This book is an attempt to portray the life of the Indian Muslims in all its aspects, beginning with the advent of the Muslims in India.' This is undoubtedly an ambitious project. However, Professor Mujeeb has brought to this work historical erudition and a deep and sympathetic insight which has helped him to overcome to a large extent the enormous difficulties which must have presented themselves before him during his work on this project.

The author prefaces his detailed survey of the 'life of the Indian Muslims, in all its aspects' during the three epochs in which he has sought fit to divide his book, by a chapter in which he introduces the subject and by another in which he discusses the Muslim political system imported into India by the Turks in the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. He makes a comparison of the Muslim political system with the indigenous political and social organization of India during those days and points out why 'the Rajput political system had little chance of withstanding the Turks.'

In his introductory chapter Mujeeb is at pains to bring out the Indian influences on Islam which have depicted themselves in the behaviour-patterns of the Indian Muslims. While he recognizes that the presence of Muslims in India could, to a certain extent, be traced to conquest and immigration, he traces the Indian influences on Islam as practised by the Indian Muslims to the fact that 'the vast majority of the Indian Muslims are converts.' While Mujeeb does not deny that in certain cases force might have been used for purposes of conversion, he comes to the conclusion, on the basis of historical data available, that 'The main agency for conversion were the mystics, and most of the large-scale conversions seem to have taken place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.'

What was it that moulded this body of converts into a self-consciously separate community? In other words, what were 'the forces that kept its diverse elements together'? While Mujeeb refers to both

political interest and employment opportunities as forces that worked towards the solidarity of the Indian Muslims, he assigns them a very minor role. According to Mujeeb, 'The only unifying factor among Indian Muslims was common allegiance to Islam. This allegiance created the sentiment of belonging to a community, and this sentiment has been the point at which religion, the instinct for self-preservation, political interest and social traditions can be said to meet. This sentiment can remain latent or dormant for generations, but it can also be roused to fever pitch within an incredibly short time.'

Mujeeb, of course, concedes that this sentiment 'has not been a generally active force.' But, we have seen that when in an extraordinary situation, as happened during the decade 1937-47, the sentiment was roused to a fever pitch (irrespective of the aims and objectives as well as the nature of the leadership that consciously aroused it) it left a lasting effect on the history of the sub-continent.'

This essentially subjective reason that has been advanced by Mujeeb to explain the solidarity of the Indian Muslims, leads him to give an equally subjective answer to the question: Who are the Indian Muslims? Mujeeb's answer is: 'If we have to define the Indian Muslims, we can only say that they are Indians who call themselves Muslims, who believe in the unity and fraternity of the Muslims as a religious and social community, and are capable of showing in practice that they act in accordance with this belief, however they might differ in doctrine and observances.'

After the introductory chapters, Mujeeb turns to a detailed analysis of the Indian Muslim life in the three epochs which he has marked out for himself. He subdivides each period into various chapters, each chapter dealing with one important topic. These chapters encompass a discussion of orthodoxy and the orthodox, statesmen and administrators, religious thought, sufism and sufism, poets and writers, art and architecture and social life. This systematic treatment which pervades the book adds to the importance of the work. A person interested in one aspect of Indian Muslim life, e.g., art and architecture, can read the chapters under that heading only and thereby come to acquire an understanding of Muslim art and architecture in India during the entire period of 1000 years.

On the other hand, if a reader desires a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of Muslim life during a particular epoch he can read the chapters dealing with all the subjects in that particular period. It is interesting to note that the chapter on sufism is missing from the discussion of the modern period—an indication that the sufi tradition has ceased to be of importance during the last 200 years.

The encyclopaedic comprehensiveness of Mujeeb's treatment of the subject leaves the reader rather

bewildered. The present reviewer, will, therefore, not undertake a detailed discussion of the various parts, chapters, and topics included in the book, but would rather limit himself to pointing out a couple of shortcomings, in this otherwise profound analysis, that seem to hit the eye.

The first and foremost of these is the rather sketchy treatment accorded by Mujeeb to the period just preceding partition, especially when compared to the treatment of the subject during the earlier periods. The author has failed to do adequate justice to the various aspects of Muslim life, especially the political aspect, during this period which had such momentous consequences for the sub-continent in general and the Indian Muslims in particular. In this connection, mention needs to be made of the inadequate coverage accorded to M. A. Jinnah who—whether we like it or not—did play a very important role in shaping the destiny of the Muslim community of undivided India during the decade just prior to partition and independence.

Another point related to this concerns the controversy regarding the one-nation versus the two-nation theory which had generated so much heat and fury in the years immediately preceding partition, and which, to this day, continues to condition the thinking of so many people on both sides of the Indo-Pakistani border. Most Muslim scholars of the sub-continent have failed to do adequate justice to this controversy and have been unable to weigh impartially the *pros* and *cons* of the arguments made by the two contending forces. This has been the result of the commitment on the part of these scholars to either one side or the other. In the process the academic value of their work has suffered. A number of scholars like Abid Hussain, Hafeez Malik and K. K. Aziz can be mentioned in this connection. It was expected that Professor Mujeeb would be able to succeed where others had failed. Unfortunately, Mujeeb has also not been able to throw any fresh and impartial light on this subject.

Then again, Mujeeb fails to lay down any guidelines which, in his opinion, the Indian Muslims should follow under the present circumstances. 'The Indian Muslims in a disastrous bid to over-assert their independent personality in the years just preceding partition have succeeded only in becoming, to quote Mujeeb himself, 'a much smaller minority in India, physically not less but more vulnerable by the creation of the separate State of Pakistan with their loyalties obviously open to suspicion and doubt, and their future nothing but the darkness of uncertainty.'

It was expected that Mujeeb with his thorough grasp of Indian and Muslim history would be able to pose some guidelines which might help the Indian Muslims to tackle the various economic, social, cultural and political problems which they are faced with and which they have to meet in the context of an Indian State which professes to be

secular and grants them rights which are in no measure less than those granted to persons belonging to the majority community. It is not enough, as Mujeeb does, to conclude with the statement: 'The Indian Muslims are accepting the decisions of the majority in their respective States and the Union, and hoping for the best.'

The question that should have been raised, and answered if possible, by Mujeeb should have been: how can the Indian Muslims, from their present position of relatively greater weakness and vulnerability (when compared to the pre-1947 situation) not only accept the decisions of the majority with good grace but also endeavour in a secular set up to influence those decisions in such a way that they might further strengthen the bases of Indian secularism. And secularism—let us face facts—has to the Indian Muslims become a vested interest today. The future of the Muslims, more than that of any community in India, has become linked with the success or failure of the secular experiment in the country.

The majority community as a whole and the enlightened leaders of that community in particular should also understand that there are certain distinctive cultural and religious characteristics that make the Indian Muslims what they are—a part of the national mainstream no doubt, but yet distinct. As Badruddin Tyabji has pointed out in an article in *The Statesman* of April 22, 1968: 'After all, a minority—religious, regional or lingual—remains a minority because it considers the differences that distinguish it from the majority of sufficient value to itself to put up with the disadvantages that inevitably attach to a minority position in any situation—particularly in a democracy. What a minority wants from the majority is a recognition, or at least an understanding, of the value that it attaches to those differences; a willingness to accept them as valid and not to dismiss them as worthless or alien intrusions in the multi-coloured fabric of our national life.' It is only by this painfully slow process of mutual understanding that both the major communities in India can be expected to grow and prosper.

Mohammed Ayooob

#### **RIOTS IN ROURKELA: A Psychological Study**

B. B. Chatterji, P. N. Singh and G. R. S. Rao.

Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi. Published by Popular Book Services, New Delhi, 1967.

We have lived with Hindu-Muslim riots for a long time indeed. Hindu-Muslim unity was one of the important items of Gandhiji's constructive programme which he gave to the country in the early twenties. His last fast in Delhi was directed at stopping the post-partition Hindu-Muslim rioting. We never tire of publicly asserting our secular

ideals but it is perhaps an indication of the great chasm between our proclaimed ideals and actions that a study of the social and psychological causes of riots undertaken nearly seventeen years after independence claims to be the first book of its kind.

The authors claim this study 'to be little more than a chronological record of events'. It is divided in six chapters. Three of these are devoted to reporting the findings of the events that took place in Rourkela between 5th to 25th March, 1964 involving 'thousands' of Hindus, Muslims and Adivasis in which at least 34 persons were killed. The authors devote an eight page chapter to 'Method of Study'. Sugata Dasgupta, now the Joint Director of the Institute, discusses practical steps to plough back the findings of the study for preventive and remedial steps to find a solution of this problem. The authors have themselves written a 27 page 'critique' of their findings.

This study is based on interviews conducted within six weeks of rioting with a sample of 200 respondents which included 31 Muslims, 38 Adivasis and 131 Hindus. Of these, 112 came from Old Rourkela, Rourkela Township and Jhirapani Rehabilitation Colony—areas where intense disturbances took place. The remaining 88 respondents belonged to Boniagarh, Tensa and Juniani, three communities, where there was 'a certain amount of tension' but which 'did not lead to any disturbances'. This cohort of 88 respondents was thus a control group. All respondents were chosen by 'simple random sampling'. Sixteen other respondents were 'purposively' chosen from among the top government officials, (both Central and State, including Steel Plant and Railway officials), leaders of different political parties and various communities. These were interviewed to collect 'factual events of the disturbances'.

Interviews were conducted with the help of schedules that contained open-ended questions 'with probes wherever necessary' by 'volunteers and paid local people drawn from college students and teachers'. These interviewers were given 'necessary training and orientation.

The 'general findings' of the study indicate that:

- 1) while a large proportion of Hindus (about 3/4) and about half the Adivasis felt no tensions in the post riots situation only one out of every four Muslims felt this way (p. 39);
- 2) after the riots were over a significant proportion of the Muslim sample within Rourkela 'did not feel a sense of belonging to the total community' (p. 41);
- 3) although rumours created considerable tension in the communities and thus modified their normal behaviour, respondents 'were not able to give correct information about the time, place and channel of communication' through which,

they heard rumours (p. 45); there was also a 'more or less complete non-overlapping' among the three communities as to the responsibility for initiating rumours (p. 50);

- 4) from among the minority community those who lived within the focus of disturbance generally tended to deny beliefs in rumours whereas those away from the disturbed spots 'tended to have greater belief in rumours' (p. 60);
- 5) the susceptibility of Hindus to the effect of rumours remained moderate whether they resided within the zone of disturbance or away from it (p. 60);
- 6) a very small proportion of the respondents of all the three communities believed that the riots were inevitable (p. 63);
- 7) business rivalries, administrative inaction, looting (Muslims) refugee trains and communalism (Adivasis) and Pak spies and refugee trains (Hindus) were identified by the three communities as the major causes of riots (p. 68).

An important part of this investigation was to identify beliefs and opinions about causes of communal disturbances. Their importance cannot be over-estimated. These factors are more important than even the actual causes of riots because any remedial or preventive action to tackle them has to be taken in (by now the well known source) 'the minds of men'.

A large proportion of Rourkela Muslims believed in the existence of 'long time...previous preparation for the riots by the Hindus'. There was also an all-round agreement that refugee trains added to the tensions and that 'happenings in Pakistan were related to happenings in Rourkela'. All the Adivasis, 92 per cent Muslims and 80 per cent Hindu respondents believed that riots 'are preventable'. A considerable proportion of respondents from all the three communities believed that Hindus and Muslims could live in harmony. To the Adivasis the Kashmir problem or even theft of the holy relic in Srinagar did not mean much although to the other religious communities these were important considerations contributing to an accentuation of tensions.

It was also found that the alleged atrocities committed on Hindus in East Pakistan, rumours that Muslims served poisoned food to refugee trains, the cry of revenge to be taken for disturbances in East Pakistan from where refugee trains were coming, the generally emotionally surcharged atmosphere in which every one feared that Muslims in large numbers were going to invade non-Muslim areas and the rumour that two hundred rupees would be offered for every Muslim head were some of the immediate provocations that led to an outburst of communal conflict. Although the study was not able to identify the role of rumour, it is

obvious from the above that current rumours did add to the existing tensions.

The authors of this study have themselves identified some of their limitations. These include: interviews were held soon after rioting and the benefit of supporting evidence as to what the thinking of the respondents was before and after the 'crisis'; interviews were held soon after rioting and the responses were not free from tensions, fear or insecurity among at least the minority group respondents; the interview schedules were not pre-tested and the general non-availability of trained interviewers (p. 21-22). This reviewer is of the opinion that a mere enumeration of these limitations does not absolve the authors of a big responsibility for not avoiding the avoidable pitfalls.

The study sample is also not well balanced. The generalizations made on the basis of the responses of 31 Muslims and 38 Adivasi respondents are rather sweeping. The figures given in percentages can be misleading even though the conclusions are drawn on the basis of the statements actually recorded by the interviewers, who the authors themselves admitted were not well trained. It has also been mentioned that Oriya and Hindi translations of the schedules were prepared and used. One still wants an assurance that the interviewers were fully familiar with the schedules and the translation.

Nothing is mentioned about the communal affiliation of the interviewers themselves. It is difficult to identify the part their communal affiliation might have played in getting 'expected replies' from the Muslim respondents. This question assumes considerable importance in the light of the statement made by the authors themselves that Muslim respondents were actuated by a desire to 'answer in a socially desirable manner' (p. 103).

Another important methodological question pertains to the adoption of the five point scale in soliciting replies to 'loaded questions' (21 to 35, p. 117). Investigators gathering opinions and attitudes of even sophisticated professional groups can easily visualize the problems in the use of this method among a sample of respondents with 40 per cent illiterates and particularly where they were required to choose from a wide variety of options. Interview schedule for use among Muslim respondents, for instance, includes a question which reads: please tell me the people you prefer to work with? The precoded responses leave the respondent a choice between 'Hindus, Bengalis, Oriyas, Punjabis, Adivasis and Christians'—a strange mixture of religious, linguistic and racial groups.

Dasgupta's summation of the study findings and his efforts at prescribing solutions is an amazing exercise in a near categorical diagnosis of the situation and a re-work of some well known and hackneyed solutions. His reliance on what he calls programmes of social education and his candid admission in the very next breath of the problem of dearth of local leadership are self contradictory.

His concept of 'particularized attention' through what he calls 'positive plans of community action' is so delightfully vague that it is no more than an empty slogan. Acceptance of some of his suggestions would certainly call for more research but one doubts whether it would lead to any permanent solution of the problem.

This reviewer doubts the usefulness of a 'yes-no' type of opinion surveys in tackling such complex questions as Hindu-Muslim tensions and riots. Prolonged contacts with communities, depth interviews with selected respondents over a period of time might help a group of highly trained and sophisticated investigators to identify basic causes of tensions and deep seated insecurities which might in its turn enable them to develop hypotheses to be tested with larger samples. This study, done by the Varanasi group has clearly demonstrated the need for a better organized investigation in this vital area of intergroup relations in the context of conditions peculiar to the Indian sub-continent.

The book is set in easily readable type but is badly printed and is full of typographical errors which could have been easily avoided.

H. S. Takulia

**MEERUT RIOTS: A Case Study** By Aswini K. Ray and Suhas Chakravarti.

**FANCHI RIOTS: Factual Analyses of the Tragic Happenings in August '67.**

**R.S.S., MINORITIES AND JANA SANGH**

**IS R.S.S. BEHIND COMMUNAL RIOTS?** By Subhadra Joshi. Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee, New Delhi.

Socio-economic conditions in India have always been peculiarly amenable to the rise of religio-theological movements—Jainism, Buddhism and its schism Advaita, Visisht Advaita, Davaita movements, Tantric cults, Sufi and various Bhakti cults, Sikhism and still later, the Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj and the Radha Swami, Kusum Harinath and Sai Baba cults. All these religio-theological movements were merely directed against certain specific superstitions and tended to substitute them with other kinds of superstition. While they fought against certain social evils and facilitated caste and/or religious mobility in the Indian society, they did not intend to do away with the irrational outlook and practice—i.e. irrationality as such.

The connection of Brahmo Samajists with the British in the consolidation of their rule in India and the quoting of the scriptures and *Dharmashastras* to justify social reforms, of course necessitated by the conditions of nineteenth century society, was already pointing to the possible danger of mixing up religio-theological practices with politics and administration. With the rise of the Arya Samaj,

based on a slightly reformed Hindu *dharma*, so-called, coupled with national sentiment, religion indented itself into politics. Besides, the early growth of the Hindu middle classes and the British discrimination against the Muslims in the services after 1857 and, later, the competition in jobs between Hindus and Muslims, tended to make people look on politico-administrative issues as religious issues. The early national movement led by Tilak, Lajpat Rai and similar other leaders, viewed independence and national liberation, not as political issues, but as protection of India's purity and glory conceived essentially as religion or *dharma*.

Caught in this general movement of history, even Gandhiji could not keep politics separate from religion, although his advocacy of a kind of pantheism covered all religions. National interests were distorted as the interests of this or that religious community. Similarly, the religio-theological interests of this or that community were elevated to the position of national and class interests. That politics and religion need not have been so mixed up is a magnificent subjunctive choice, but that they did get mixed up is a plain fact.

It is this situation which the British rulers, like any ruling class perpetuating its rule, seized upon, and made use of to foment distrust between the two major religio-theological communities in India—the Hindus and the Muslims. This is how the phenomenon, usually called communalism in India, came into being. With independence and the partition of India, communalism took a far more serious turn and is still plaguing us.

Whatever the religio-theological denominations, culturally, territorially and hence constitutionally, the Indian people are one nation. But there are organisations which mix up religion with politics and *vice versa*, and misrepresent national interest as the religio-theological community interest or *vice versa*, fomenting differences between communities and engineering riots, defeating our national unity and interests, the cancer of communalism deserves to be destroyed. Unfortunately, like for cancer, there hasn't yet come into being an eradicating cure for communalism. So far the Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee (S.V.C.) has been doing some work to bring about harmony between communities to fight against communalism. The four pamphlets under review are part of the efforts of the S.V.C.

The pamphlet on Meerut is the joint effort of two research officers—professional 'scholars', who have dilated on less important, more immediate causes of the Meerut riots like neighbours' quarrels and rumours that grow in the telling, yet barely touched on more important questions of communal riots being an urban problem and that it's the tussle over jobs and trading interests which take on communal overtones.

The economic problem is inadequately dealt with, even though towards the end they give the story

of a young mother recovering from her stab wounds who said that '...the community does not matter, the only thing she knew was that they were poor and had been deprived of the earnings of the only breadwinner.' Also, the grounds of sympathy between the business community and communal-minded parties isn't analysed or brought out in detail. It's given a bare mention.

Meerut's communal politics are supposed to be due to '...its lack of ideological commitments...' (p. 2.) The 'scholars' do not seem to know that communalism is also an 'ideological commitment.' What they perhaps mean is political as opposed to communalist commitment. Scholars have the least right to confuse one concept with another. The scholars merely say 'election results' showed that the voting had generally followed communal lines, while in the rest of U.P. they hold the voting to have followed caste lines. Why there should be this difference in Meerut is not even raised as a question. The links between the petty-bourgeois business community and the communal-minded parties is also just mentioned, not analysed or brought out in detail.

The communal ridden atmosphere is heightened by the Hindu Mahasabha President running a paper—reported circulation, 3,000—in which he reiterates that India belongs to the Hindus and that any attempt at establishing communal harmony is foredoomed and that communal riots will come to stay.

In the Ranchi riots, which are the subject matter of the other pamphlet, not only the Jana Sangh, the R.S.S., but Congress members (often printed as Congress K. Bites), also joined in, with the connivance of the police, the Home Guards and the Army. In Ranchi, the riots followed the old pattern of attacking masjids or mosques, this time under the auspices of an anti-Urdu agitation. The pamphlet consists of three memoranda—two presented to the Prime Minister, which includes a damning indictment and signed, 'The Muslims of Ranchi.' It said: 'We want security, security of life, security of property, security of honour and security of culture. These despite the guarantee in our Constitution have been buried.' The memorandum also pleads for army divisions from the south to be brought in during the rioting because 'Wherever there takes place communal trouble, South Indian army should be called which is free from communalism', because, 'Innocent Muslims were arrested, brutally assaulted, their houses searched without warrants, belongings looted and women humiliated... These atrocities committed by the police, Home Guards and Army have been witnessed by police Minister. Protectors acted as destructors...'

All this is a matter of shame and concern to both our government and our people that it was '...the Shanti Sainiks and the foreign Christian mission-

aries who rushed for rescue and help to suffering Muslims.' Enough is now known about the dubious activities of foreigners keen on fishing in our troubled waters. Such 'help' can only foment further trouble. The second memorandum raises similar points and the third is about the difficulties of Muslim students and Housemen of the Rajendra Medical College submitted to the Education Minister, Bihar, complaining about the partisan attitude of the college principal, a Hindu.

Not surprisingly, no one seems to want to take credit for the pamphlet on 'R.S.S., Minorities and Jana Sangh.' It seems to be a sort of review of a book of Golwalkar by M.A. Venkata Rao. Excerpts are presumably taken from the book although there are no quotation marks to indicate the exact location. What seem like refutations are vague and verbose. The pamphlet sounds more like an anti-Muslim tirade and the S.V.C. would do well to read their own pamphlets before putting their stamp on them.

The fourth pamphlet, 'Is R.S.S. Behind Communal Riots?' is by Subhadra Joshi, the Convener of the S.V.C. She regards communal hatred and killings as a twentieth century creation of the British—a partial truth—and quotes from Gandhiji to show how our national leaders have always believed in Hindu-Muslim unity. But along with independence came partition and R.S.S. frenzy rose to the occasion. She relates how the R.S.S. was banned after Gandhiji's murder and how its technique was generally in two phases. Stories about rape and murder by Muslims were always a favourite method. Next came rumours about possible attacks by Muslims on Hindu targets.

Subhadra Joshi also brings out the links between businessmen and the R.S.S. and how businessmen were persuaded to make donations to the R.S.S. just to protect Hinduism and how they trained young men in the use of daggers and spears—not usually regarded as necessary for body-building exercises. Their weekly, *Organiser*, blazed a rape case for weeks. A more recent creation of the R.S.S. was the trouble in Kashmir over the marriage of a Hindu girl to a Muslim—an occurrence which had been quite common in Kashmir. Subhadra Joshi also tells how the R.S.S. operated behind scenes during the Ranchi riots and ends her pamphlet with the warning that if R.S.S. activity isn't suppressed, '...it may, one day drown democracy in the whirlpool of communal carnage.'

The warning is very necessary. Secularism and democracy have received a set-back over the last few years. Inexpensive books and pamphlets emphasizing the need to combat communalism are very necessary and would be more effective if they weren't scrappy and unreadable and if the pamphlets were proof-read with greater competence.

Kusum Madgavkar



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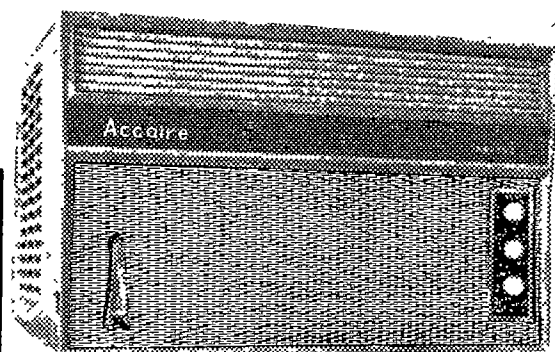
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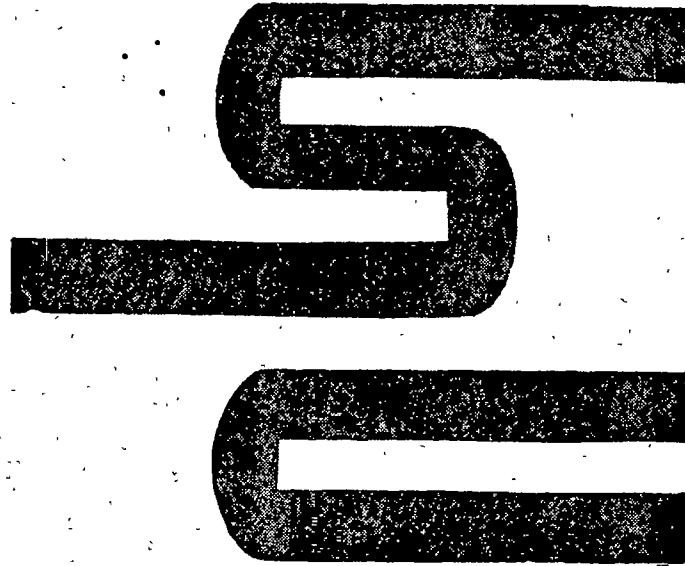
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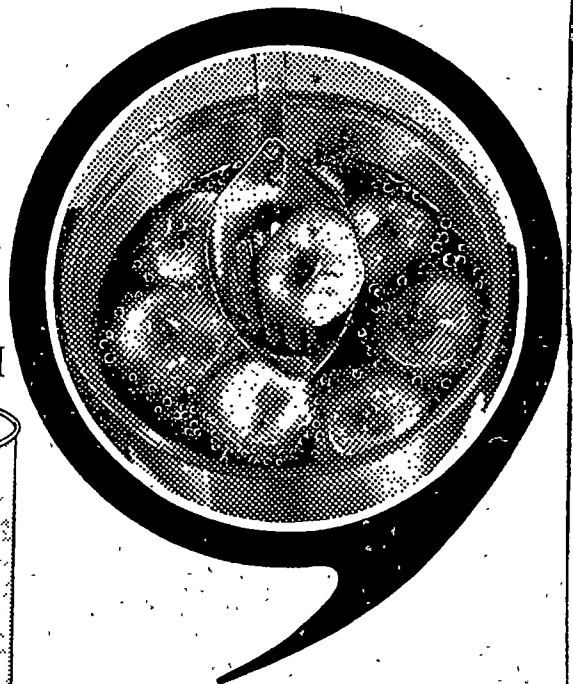
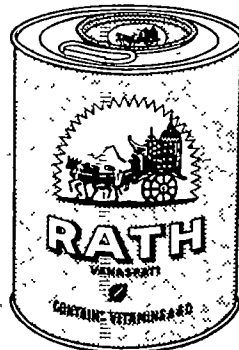


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# The problem

EVENTS in India during the last year have begun to create misgivings in many minds about the very basis of our political order. Earlier, there had been setbacks and disappointments but few really doubted that, given patience and skill, these could be put right. This mood of optimism has been steadily eroded and come to be replaced by a kind of loss of nerve in the face of what the newspapers report almost every day from one part of the country or another.

What has gone wrong with the political order which was ushered in with so much enthusiasm after independence? Is the malaise which so many feel today a passing phenomenon or is it a symptom of inherent contradictions between the new political order and its social infrastructure? We have to ask whether the kinds of tasks which we expect our political institutions to perform can in fact be achieved within the existing social framework.

It is a truism that the kind of formal political order we have adopted, developed in the west as an expression of certain values which are in many ways different from those by which traditional Indian society has been governed. The ones which come to mind immediately are

the notion of equality and the recognition of the individual (as opposed to his community) as the basic unit of social action. Attempts have been made to show that these values have also their place in Indian tradition. The point, however, is that their historical links with the institutions of modern democracy are here obscure and tenuous unlike in the west.

Twenty years ago the feeling was that the creation of certain institutional structures would in itself bring about a just society in which people could freely exercise their choice in order to better their own conditions. Hence the immediate task was to build these institutions. Organs of representative government were established at the Centre and in the States, and then came the institutions of Panchayati Raj. A bureaucratic structure of the administration had already been established under the British and this was further expanded by the rulers of independent India.

It would be safe to say that two of the most important sections of the elite in modern India are the politicians and the bureaucrats. As Bottomore has written recently, "These groups have borne the major responsibility for

India's economic and social development thus far, and they are likely to bear it in the foreseeable future.' It would be useful to compare and contrast these two sections of the elite in terms of their position and performance. Here, one has to consider politicians and administrators not merely at the top level but also at the district and lower levels.

Perhaps, the most striking feature of social change in India during the last two decades has been the transformation in the character of its political leadership. Positions of power have multiplied enormously and politics has become one of the most important avenues of social mobility. During British rule, the arena of politics was limited, and effective competition was confined to a small stratum of society. Today, those who seek and acquire political power come from a much wider range of social strata.

This rapid increase in politicization has revived the role of a number of traditional forces in Indian society. Political success has increasingly come to mean the ability to mobilize and to exploit traditional sentiments, values and loyalties. When these act against the interests of a rational impersonal order, the latter are often sacrificed. So far there has been a measure of complacency about this; it has been comfortingly assumed that the two sets of forces can be readily reconciled, if not today then in the near future.

The ways in which the formal political institutions are used for furthering traditional loyalties have been indicated by many. There is the view of M. N. Srinivas that the new political forces tend to strengthen rather than weaken the regime of caste. Until the nineteenth century, caste was a localised phenomenon. It has been stimulated by the new political opportunities to organize itself on a scale which was hitherto unknown. Caste is today an active principle in determining who will support whom and on what terms.

Even more important than caste, particularly in the context of our national life, are the divisions based on linguistic or regional criteria. The castes within a region were at least in principle complementary to each other; no such ideas of complementarity seem to bind the regions together. Regionalism has more than once taken explosive forms; but more important perhaps are the day-to-day frustrations of a political and administrative system which forces one to ask at every step whether such and such a person is a north Indian or a south Indian, a Gujarati, a Maharashtrian or a Mysorean.

There are some who now tend to argue that the role of caste, region and religion has been

greatly overstressed in sociological studies of political life. It has to be conceded that there is no clear pattern in the relationship of these factors to the political system. People vote across the lines of caste as frequently as they do along it. Politics, according to this view, is much better characterised as a system of factional bargaining in which people act on the basis of sound material calculations.

There is ample evidence to support the view that the political process operates through shrewd calculations of material interests. This is perhaps the most conspicuous feature of the 'politicization' which one hears so much about. But this kind of politics is rarely, if at all, based on a clear perception of broad or fundamental economic issues. In other words, if caste and community are becoming less important, this does not mean that politics is showing much signs of being organized along the lines of class. In the earlier phase, caste and community provided the organizing principle of politics. What we are witnessing today is a politics which is amorphous in terms of virtually any kind of recognizable structural principle.

One consequence of the kind of factionalism one finds in Indian politics is that it tends to block the development of a party system as a system having its own constraints and commitments. Cleavages within a party (particularly, the dominant party) tend to be remarkably similar to those between parties. Any set of opposed groups (whether parties or factions) is of course likely to have certain structural properties in common with any other. But a party system is something more than merely a set of opposed groups. Following a useful distinction developed by social anthropologists, parties differ from factions in being structural units and not merely social categories. They have organizations which ensure the continuity of values and traditions in addition to that of personnel; factions, by contrast, are amorphous in nature. A party is a 'corporation', having an existence which is independent of its members whereas a faction is something ephemeral.

Is there nothing in common between the politics of caste (or communal politics in general) and that of factional bargaining? Assuming that there has been a movement from the first to the second, it would seem that this movement does not alter basically the problems of operating smoothly and efficiently the new types of political and administrative systems, because the latter require certain commitments which are absent from both caste politics and factional politics.

Communal politics and the politics of factional bargaining both operate through an

idiom which is essentially personal in character. Whether one votes for a member of one's own caste or for an influential patron, the links which bind one to such an individual are likely to be concrete and personal. Sometimes the relationship between a candidate and the voter (or, in general, between leaders and their supporters) is mediated by a variety of intermediaries. These may or may not belong to one's own community, but generally they are linked to each other by diffuse, multiplex relationships.

The importance of concrete, personal links (or of relations of patronage in the most general sense) should not be viewed as an exclusive feature of Indian society. Such networks are frequent in western society as well, and American politics has been notorious for its system of patronage. But western democracies have developed, in addition a system of rules to which people have some commitment independently of the concrete individuals through whom the rules are operated.

It has to be understood that the political system as a relatively *autonomous* system, having its own 'rules of the game' is not a universal feature of human societies. In western industrial societies, it is able to carry its own weight due to a variety of factors among which education and experience are of particular importance. In India, the general level of education of the population is low and as yet the experience of running a political system of this kind is rather brief. But it is possible that there are more deeply rooted values which block the development of a commitment to abstract rules and an impersonal order. Obviously, this is not the place to enter into a search for these factors or their cultural roots.

But, most likely, it is these factors which will ultimately explain the malaise underlying political life in contemporary India. This finds expression in frequent crossings of the floor, continuous shifts in coalitions (of both parties and factions) and, in general, in what is described as political opportunism. It would be unwise to dismiss these merely as acts of individual aberration or even as evidence of a low moral tone in public life. People who act in these ways are perhaps personally no less honest than politicians elsewhere in the world. They also act on the basis of their own values and commitments. What is in question is whether and to what extent these can be made compatible with the demands of an impersonal order which seems to be a prerequisite for the proper functioning of our formal political institutions.

The failures of administration show the same symptoms and have perhaps the same roots as

those of politics. The essential condition of a bureaucratic system of administration is that it operates through a set of impersonal rules. The operation of these rules ensures economy and efficiency, and similar consideration for all irrespective of kinship, caste, and community.

Officials in India, particularly at the lower levels, are frequently criticized for their violations of the standards of impersonal conduct. With the expansion of the State machinery, the number of government employees has increased at a very high rate. The citizen is now required to approach officials in an increasing range of contexts and to enter into multifarious relations with them. It is necessary to examine the bases on which these relations are ordered.

The citizen frequently finds that the best way to approach an official is through some personal link. It is well known how in Delhi an official from a particular region, or one belonging to a particular religion will generally be approached through a person of his own region, caste or religion. When a Mysorean wants to get some work done at the income tax office, for instance, he will first seek out someone from Mysore in the relevant department rather than the official directly concerned. Sometimes the channels of such communication are extremely complex. Frequently, the crucial link in the chain is one of friendship rather than of religion, caste or kinship, but almost always some kind of personal factor is involved.

The official who would like to operate on strictly impersonal principles finds it very difficult to resist the pressures built into the system. He soon discovers that his clientele is not homogenous. If he has favours to dispense, the beneficiaries will often be members of his own community if only because these are the people who approach him most frequently.

Today, there are other pressures under which officials have to work. Politicians are less committed to the rules of impersonal conduct than are bureaucrats. Whereas the bureaucrat is appointed on the basis of aptitude and merit, the very position of a politician in public life often depends on the support of a particular community. A politician is not even expected to be neutral in the same sense as an official. To the extent that the administration is weak, and can be pressurised or bought off, the principle of neutralism suffers. But is the administration itself run by people with a strong commitment to impersonal standards of conduct?

ANDRÉ BETEILLE



# A new hypothesis

A. R. DESAI

ACCORDING to the author who has posed the problem, the sensitive minds in India are bewildered by the developments that are taking place. He feels that the anxiety about Indian development is being converted into disenchantment and some of the most cherished hopes, dreams and expectations are being belied by the recent happenings in India. The problem is posed in the form of important queries for a discussion of the issues raised by them. The queries take on the understated forms.

(1). What has gone wrong with the political order which was ushered in with so much of enthusiasm after independence?

(2) Is the malaise a passing phenomenon or a symptom of inherent contradictions between the new political order and its social infra-structure?

(3) Can political institutions in India perform the tasks which we expect of them within the existing social framework?

(4) Why are the two major categories of leadership, viz., politicians and administrative cadres instead of becoming staunch crusaders against 'traditional', 'particularistic', 'ascriptive' values and institutions like caste, regional and 'narrow religious-communal' values and institutions, which their very 'universalistic', modern, 'individualistic', 'achieving' and 'impersonal' position and status demands, are on the contrary 'mobilising', 'exploit-

ing' and strengthening the traditional sentiments, values, loyalties and institutions'?

(5) Why are formal political institutions instead of being used as weapons to fight traditional values and loyalties being used as instruments of the very same traditional institutions?

(6) Why has the political process degenerated from being based on a clear perception of broad fundamental economic issues into a process operating to subserve the material interests of factions and groups, which are amorphous in terms of virtually any kind of recognisable structural principle?

(7) Why have formal democratic processes of representative institutions instead of ensuring the growth of a sound party system having its own structural units, (i.e. organizations which ensure the continuity of values and traditions and which like a Corporation 'having its existence which is independent of its members, and further having its own constraints and commitments') generated factions which are merely social categories, amorphous in character and with very ephemeral organizational continuity? By their very nature they lack continuity of values and traditions in addition to constraints and commitments from the individuals.

(8) Why have the new types of political and administrative systems, instead of functioning

smoothly and efficiently on an impersonal and universalistic basis degenerated into a mechanism functioning on 'an idiom that is essentially personal in character'. It creates a relationship between a candidate and a voter (i.e., in general between leaders and their supporters) via a chain of intermediaries having characteristics of a personal, casteist, communal or regional particularism and patronage. Similarly, the link between an official and the citizen is also developing more on personal lines. 'The candidate or the official who would like to operate strictly on impersonal principles finds it very difficult to resist the pressures built into the system. While an officer or bureaucrat is appointed on the basis of aptitude and merit, the position of a politician depends primarily on the support of a particular community.'

This raises a fundamental dilemma about the relationship between politics and society which according to the author is the root cause of the inability of the political order to counteract the pressures of a traditional, feudalistic, social structure. He is baffled by this situation and raises the question as to whether the present political order with the politicians and bureaucrats as the two modernising agencies will be able to transform society or will they become the tools of traditional forces and become instrumental in strengthening these very forces, leading to the disintegration of the social order?

### Crucial Questions

The eight crucial queries emerging from the statement of the problem reveal how our sensitive intellectuals are caught in the coils of a certain bourgeois formalistic framework of thinking. These intellectuals pose problems and discuss issues within a few conceptual categories worked out by western bourgeois and petty bourgeois scholars. These conceptual categories subserve the following major functions.

(1) They eschew the most fundamental aspects of social reality, viz., class-structure of a

society and the inherent exploitative essence of the capitalist social order.

(2) They hide the fact that the State is in essence a coercive apparatus to buttress a particular type of property system and is an instrument of the economically dominant class to regulate the class struggle in favour of that class.

(3) They sidetrack the discussion connected with the world imperialist system having two facets, viz., advanced imperialist countries and their colonial and semi-colonial appendages, and prevent the examination of the issue of the possibility or otherwise of newly liberated colonial countries to develop in an unfettered manner within the framework of a capitalist system. In short, they do not want to pose the crucial question: can the capitalist class in the ex-colonial countries, after having come to power, resolve the elementary bourgeois democratic tasks, or will it require a socialist revolution overthrowing the bourgeoisie as a class in society to start the upward move for the people? This diversion of discussion from the basic issues confronting nearly two thirds of mankind is worked out on the basis of a large number of concepts made current these days.

### Misplaced Emphases

These conceptual categories thus prevent the intellectuals from even posing correct questions. In fact, these concepts bog them down into an unreal, formal and circuitous discussion. Even the right issues are not taken up by them about the trends of development which are taking place in India after the British imperialist withdrawal from India on the basis of an unprincipled deal with the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.

The eight issues presented in the problem do not even refer to the crucial aspects of Indian development during the war and post-war developments in India. For instance, any serious discussion about politics and society in India should have begun by asking at

least the following few questions, which have a vital bearing on developments during the war and the post-war era.

### Basic Issues

(1) Why was Indian independence not secured on the basis of a gigantic anti-imperialist colonial revolutionary movement by the Indian National Congress (which claimed itself to be the party opposed on principle to partition on communal lines)? Why did the Indian National Congress, a party which claimed that it was the staunchest espouser of undivided India, and which posed as the bitterest opponent of communal vivisection, not organize and develop the growing militant movements of the exploited and oppressed masses and even the revolts of the police, the army, the navy and the air force who were themselves spontaneously elaborating such struggles as the INA, RIN and Air Force mutinies? Why did the Indian National Congress instead of developing these struggles—the best practical antidote to casteism and communalism—remain indifferent and even hostile to them? Further, why did this party instead of spearheading the masses, enter into an unscrupulous deal with the British rulers to vivisect India on communal lines and thus become an agency generating one of the most frightful communal carnages in the history of mankind and the most agonizing uprooting of millions of people.

(2) Was this unprincipled deal between the British imperialist masters, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League not motivated to serve some fundamental class and group interests? Have these classes and groups whose interests prompted the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to bargain unscrupulously with British imperialism, disappeared after independence? Are the forces and factors which led to the communal vivisection of India not operating even today?

(3) This leads us to a more fundamental examination of the

relation between politics and society. It compels us to locate the classes which are interested in utilizing communalism to subserve their basic interests. The main function of communalism today as it was during the British period has been to prevent the unification of the exploited, poor and oppressed section of the population, who basically live by selling their labour-power. It also helps in the competition among various propertied classes. This unification is the greatest danger to the existence of a system wherein a small class of property-owners exploit and oppress the majority of toiling masses.

### Unchanged Social Order

It leads to another important issue for a student of Indian society and politics. Is the social order which is being generated in India and Pakistan after independence, not the same exploitative-capitalist order? Is not the difference between the two with regard to class-structure and property relations only quantitative? The social structure which is emerging after independence in India and the one which existed during the British period is fundamentally of the same quality, so far as property relations and class system are concerned. The only difference which can be easily visible is that during the British period, it was the British capitalist class which was the ruling class and which elaborated the State apparatus to subserve basically its class interest, while after independence it was the Indian capitalist class which has become the ruling class, and has been elaborating a complex State apparatus as formulated in the Constitution basically to subserve its fundamental interest.

In this context can we not say that communalism in India today is an instrument which the Indian capitalist ruling class utilizes for driving the masses in their struggle to end the present social system which is leading them to increasing misery and intensified oppression and exploitation for the vast majority of the population?

Does this not mean that communalism will increase in proportion to the growing threat to the capitalist class which rules today and whose exploitation and oppression will increase as the capitalist class cannot improve the conditions of the masses?

I have elaborated upon the issue of partition of India and function of communalism for the following reasons.

The discussion of problems of politics and society on the basis of certain formal concepts such as modernization, modern political elite, traditional casteist, communal and linguistic forces, factional interests, enduring interests vs. factional interests would be misleading, circuitous and shorn of any fruitful grasp of the vital social forces of Indian society. Such a discussion will not help us to understand the deeper class interests served by such a phenomenon. It will also mislead us into a faulty analysis of the real class nature of the State and the true character of the ruling class and the nature of socio-economic formation which has been emerging after independence.

### Fundamental Factors

It is my submission that the same class forces which were responsible for the partition of India, with all its consequences, still operate even after twenty years of independence. They still require communalism for the same purpose which prompted them to utilize it before independence. Unless these fundamental factors are not examined and understood, we will never be able to comprehend properly the causes and reasons which are operating behind the Indo-Pakistani disputes and which keep the communal spirit alive in the *body politic* of both the countries.

A proper understanding of the politics and society in India can be arrived at only if we examine the developments after independence on the basis of the following assumptions.

The State which has evolved after independence in India is

essentially a capitalist State. The Constitution which has laid down the basic framework for political order has clearly stated this class character of the Indian State. It has formulated two categories, viz., fundamental rights and directive principles, the essential distinction between the two being that fundamental rights are protected by judicial remedies while directive principles are merely statements of desires which are not protected by courts. In the Constitution, the right to property, 'the most cherished right for the propertied classes' is considered a fundamental right, while the right to work, to employment, to education, medical aid and others which vitally affect the majority of the population are considered as directive principles. There is no juridical protection against their violation.

These vital discriminatory clauses enshrined in the Constitution most eloquently establish how the Indian State is essentially a coercive apparatus elaborated to subserve, protect and enhance the interest of capitalist and allied propertied classes who are the rulers of the country and who extract surplus value from the toiling masses and distribute it in the form of profit, rent and interest.

### Studying Class Character

It is unfortunate that no serious analysis of the class character of the Indian State has been made until now. It is necessary for an adequate understanding of the political order which is emerging in India to examine the Constitution from this angle and lay bare the true class character of the Indian Union. It is the experience of history including the contemporary one, that forms of political apparatus should be distinguished from the essence of the State. The essence of the State lies in its major premise about the socio-economic formation which it wants to protect, develop and defend.

The essence of State in Greece and Rome was that it was a slave-owner's State protecting,

developing and defending the socio-economic formation founded on a slave-mode of production. This political apparatus of the slave owning class took many forms categorized by Aristotle in his classic work on *Politics*, such as monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, polity and democracy and many other ones. But in essence these States were dictatorships of slave-owners over slaves. Similarly, modern States, whether in England or France, West Germany or Holland, Spain, Italy, Portugal or numerous Latin American, African or Asian countries where right to private property is fundamental, are in essence the capitalist States, which want to defend, develop and protect the capitalist socio-economic formation founded on the capitalist mode of production. This State may take many forms such as a monarchy, oligarchy, presidential or cabinet form, federal or unitary form, but in essence it is a political apparatus of the capitalist class.

#### Capitalistic Aims

Without clearly realizing the fact that the Indian State is the political apparatus of the Indian capitalist class, and that its basic function is to protect, develop and defend a capitalist socio-economic formation in India, no sensible rational discussion is possible about politics and society in India.

This raises the most important problem of Indian society. Can a State wedded to develop a capitalist socio-economic order, in the context of the declining phase of the world capitalist system build a prosperous economy and assure a higher standard of living for the overwhelming masses of people? Can the weak capitalist class, while assuring and augmenting its own profits simultaneously assure employment, secure minimum purchasing power, adequate education, medical facilities, shelter and other ordinary basic human needs for the vast mass of the toiling people?

Further, will the toiling masses who have now become aware of securing these basic necessities, and whose rising expectations are revolutionizing their consciousness

and making them indignant towards their present plight which they now increasingly realize is man-made and not god-made, and due to a system of property relations where the owners of the means of production exploit them and permit the socio-economic formation to persist? It is in the context of this basic irreconcilable conflict between those who sell their skills and labour power and those who own the means of production that the dynamic development of Indian society could be properly understood.

#### Gadgil's View

The impact of planned development adumbrated by the ruling class through their State and operated through plans on various strata was succinctly presented by Professor Gadgil:

'Whereas there appears to have been some increase in per capita national income during the period, the results of this have been evidently spread very unevenly over society and the economy. The cities have profited as compared with the agricultural regions. The rich agricultural regions have done well, but not so the poor ones, and, in all agricultural regions, it is only the top farmer strata that appear to have made any net improvement in their position. Agricultural labour has distinctly deteriorated in its position, and this, most probably, is also what has happened in the case of rural artisans and casual labour, and labour employed in unorganized industry, trade, and transport. Even the earnings of factory labourers have not made any significant progress if 1959 is compared with 1951. The salariat which, next to labour, is important in the cities appears to be in a stagnant, even perhaps a slightly difficult, position. It is only the traders and the industrialists who appear to have consistently done well, and among them, the bigger and those in the largest cities with the largest organized businesses appear to have done the best.'

This was written in 1961. In 1968 the conditions have further deteriorated as revealed by almost all the

major studies. The inability even to launch a fourth five-year plan upto now reveals the plight of our economic development.

The Indian capitalist class and its State now find it more and more difficult and costly to provide resources required for providing even limited employment, education, medical facilities and the bare necessities for human existence to its toiling beasts of burden. It finds their demands and struggle for their demands very uncomfortable and has therefore increasingly started discarding the mask of democracy and has been unleashing more and more a reign of terror. It is also unleashing all the forces of reaction in the form of casteism, communalism and others to divide the masses, involve them into fratricidal struggles and thereby prevent them from uniting for launching an offensive to destroy the very capitalist-socio-economic framework which is the real root-cause of the present malaise in society.

#### The States' Incapability

The fundamental question which sensitive intellectuals should ask about politics and society in India is whether it is possible for a historically weak capitalist class, even through active participation of its State, to create a social order where productive forces can develop at a tempo which would raise the standard of living of the masses to a degree enabling them to secure some of these basic minimum needs recognized as essential for at least human existence. My findings lead me to a firm negative answer.

A systematic dialogue among intellectuals taking this hypothesis as the basis will I hope lead to more fruitful conclusions.

I wish the SEMINAR organizes a series of numbers to this most fundamental question germane to politics and society in India. This question is relevant for all those ex-colonial and semi-colonial countries which are trying to reshape their economy and society on the basis of capitalist planning based on a mixed-economy.

# At the rural level

BRIJ RAJ CHAUHAN

SOCIAL and political processes operating in India at the moment can be meaningfully understood as trends operating in the country for over a century. A number of modern institutions and organizations were set up prior to independence and found full articulation in the Constitution of India and subsequent legislations. Among such processes are the devolution of power to local units, the rise of the formal procedures in administration and justice and the emergence of political and religious movements and parties. Independence came at a stage when these processes were at varying levels of maturity and these stages materially affected the working of the new institutions.

At the village level, democratic decentralization reached its culmination in the form of the emerg-

ence of the Panchayati Raj institutions. How the social processes operating over the last century provided the base for organizing the relationships between the citizen and the administration may be reviewed here. It is hoped that this review would provide insights into the manner in which the institutions are working today. The theme along which illustrative material drawn from rural and tribal areas of India, particularly Rajasthan, is being presented is: that between the poor, illiterate peasant and agricultural workers on the one hand and the administrators on the other there existed an absence of direct communication; that a class of interpreters between the governors and the millions they governed existed, whatever was the official language; and that the intermediaries were educationally

and economically more developed than the peasantry. The administration carried both power and prestige and those associated with it drew the same vicariously.

While the rural society possessed structural arrangements in the social sphere regulating marriage and other kinship ties through castes and sub-castes and enforcing other codes, at the political level the society was characterized by a sort of a mass society. There were political and social movements to be sure, highlighted by personal charismatic qualities of the leaders and, at times, attainments were dramatic, but regular arrangements for sustained political activity hardly appeared on the scene.

### Structural Vacuum

The near absence of political structures in the form of organized parties at the rural level has been sought to be overcome by the hitherto omnipotent structure—the caste and its allied and constituent units—a task for which it was hardly suited. The structural vacuum at the political level continues to be the main problem of the polity at the rural level and trying to replace it by existing social structures only enhances the problem. The theme may now be studied in the broader perspective of the relationship of the citizen and the polity as it has developed over the last century.

It has almost become a tradition of thought to consider the villages of old as little republics<sup>1</sup> which were hardly affected by political upheavals in the country. The point was specifically mentioned by Metcalfe and has been highlighted by poets and novelists painting the smooth life at a high level of sympathy for one's neighbour found in the village. Bailey, arguing from the material collected for Orissa, suggests that even in modern times, whereas

economic forces began cutting through the village, the political processes passed over it.<sup>2</sup> This view of rural life needs some re-thinking. If caste is the subject matter of study, such a conclusion is plausible. If political processes are under examination, different aspects emerge. The political arrangements of life in the feudal and the princely order could affect even the ordinary course of life in the village, and the rise of religious and political movements could have consequences on the ways people acted.

The princely States in India—with a king and chiefs of various orders like the first sixteen, the second thirty two, others with a royal recognition—provided different types of political arrangements for rural societies.<sup>3</sup> For a certain group of villages, the king was directly responsible for maintaining law and order and used the police and the revenue officials for the purpose. For another group of villages, the jagirdar used to be responsible for maintaining law and order.

### Role of Jagirdar

A good jagirdar was one who could keep the king and his police away from the village although the king thought otherwise. The jagirdar would claim prestige on the ground that 'not once over the last fifty years did a simple case from the village get reported to the police.' Both the king and the jagirdar exacted land revenue and taxes on various counts from the subjects. Voluntary and involuntary contributions could be taken on occasions such as hunting in forests, pilgrimages to holy places, marriages and coronation ceremonies. The king and the jagirdars could thereby maintain consumption at a conspicuously high level, and their programmes of hunting

and other sorts of expeditions affected and, in some ways, guided even the routine activities of the villagers.

For purposes of maintaining law and order, the king and the jagirdars had their own jurisdictions. The period of effective British intervention about a hundred and fifty years ago was marked by efforts at resolving the disputes between these two sets of power-holders. Through treaties, the provisions of the Indian Penal Code were extended to the princely States and formal courts were required to be set up for dealing with serious cases. Revenue administration had to be established on a rational basis and forest property safeguarded. Laws fixing land revenue, the process of setting it, demarcation of forests and the appointment of judges of various categories were new forces which had begun to influence the *body-politic* at the rural level even a century ago. How did the rural institutions react to these changes in the initial stages?

For deciding cases among persons of the same caste, caste-panchayats as effective bodies were in existence. In southern India, even the king recognized them as competent bodies to dispense justice. In Madras presidency, the British rulers found that caste panchayats could be constituted in an *ad-hoc* manner and used as effective agencies for administering justice. But the British also set up their own courts side by side and these proved to be the more popular ones.<sup>4</sup> The traditional courts even at the beginning of the nineteenth century had begun to be effectively displaced by the modern courts.

### Intermediary Power

Madras did not have the pattern of land-holdings of the zamindari type. The case of Bengal appeared, by contrast, to be a rather different one. The rise of the intermediary land-holding group

1. Charles Metcalfe, Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1832, Vol. III App. 84 p. 331 referred to by Srinivas, M. N. 'The Social Structure of a Mysore Village' in *India's Villages*, West Bengal Govt. Press, 1955 p. 21.

2. F. G. Bailey, *Caste and the Economic Frontier*, Oxford University Press, 1957 p. 3.

3. The details have been mentioned in the author's article 'Phases of Village Power-structure and Leadership in Rajasthan' in L. P. Vidyarthi's (ed.) *Leadership in India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1967 pp. 303-320.

4. Allan, J; Haig, T. Wolsley; Dodwell, H. H., and Sethi, R. R. (ed.). *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, Delhi, S. Chand and Co. 1958 p. 503.

made both the caste panchayats and the modern police ineffective, a situation that is of considerable relevance for understanding the current picture in Bengal. In areas like those governed by zamindars in U.P., it was known that the zamindar could impart even physical punishment to wrong doers after summary hearing, and his word had the effect of making people act as complainants to the police and appear or not appear as witnesses in courts of law.

Thus, the zamindar acted as an intermediary through whom the villager came into contact with the administration. Persons collecting land revenue, irrigation dues and, later, even the postmen, and the school teachers appeared in the village through the landlord and he facilitated the establishment and conduct of the superordinate, subordinate relationship. In all these matters, the administration seldom acted as a servicing agency. It is against this background that one has to understand the nature of the new forces at work in rural India and their impact upon the people.

The process of extending the political frontier was at work in two ways. The activities of the government were being decentralized and some of the responsibilities of administration being transferred to local self-governing units. The other process at work, particularly in what was then British India, was one of extension of the national movement to the rural areas.

#### Decentralization

The direction given to the idea of decentralization has culminated in the scheme of community projects and the implementation of the recommendations of the study team headed by Balwant Rai Mehta. The idea has been discussed for legal and developmental matters for more than a century. Ripon had thought that in building local self-governing institutions, efficiency on the technical side was less significant than the preparation of the people for the tasks of assuming self-govern-

ment.<sup>5</sup> Caution was suggested by his critics, but he thought that risks had to be taken. Initiative and caution have marked the extremes within which the questions have been discussed all these years.

By now we have the village panchayats, the nyaya panchayats in some cases coterminous with the former as in U.P. and in some cases covering a circle of village panchayats as in Rajasthan; the panchayat samitis covering a developmental block or a tehsil or a taluqua; and the district bodies in the nature of zilla parishads. Effective power vests in cases like those of Maharashtra at the district level, and in Rajasthan in the panchayat samitis at the block level.

#### New Opportunities

The rise of these institutions have opened new opportunities of sharing power at the rural level by people who otherwise would have remained beyond the operation of effective political participation. Elections to the State and parliamentary constituencies, and particularly in States having the upper house with local self-governing bodies forming the electoral college, have intensified the involvement of the political units at the rural level. The social categories from which the new occupants to power positions are drawn and the response of different sections of the people towards them are significant in understanding the nature of the political process.

The second major impact upon the rural polity has been the activities of political parties. As one tries to survey broadly the movements taking place in rural and tribal areas, one is struck by the fact that quite a number of them had got something to do with land.

In this respect, the positions of tribal and rural areas seem to have been different. The Santhal revolt in areas of Bihar was, by and large, a rebellion based on the revised land and forest policies of the government. The tribals seemed

to have possessed the characteristics of comparative isolation and non-interference from the government of the day and a sense of being a homogenous political entity managing its own affairs. In such parts of India where they had been living under the suzerainty of a princely order, they were constantly a law and order problem. One of the methods of dealing with them was of putting Rajput landlords in their midst; the other was of accepting some of the tribals as landlords, and the third was of allowing them free play beyond certain frontiers. The British intervention worked in the direction of reducing the third possibility, and treaties regarding extradition of offenders of one area from the other were visualised.

In this setting, it is of some interest to find movements of religious revival among the tribals. These movements were initiated by non-tribals in some cases but seemed to acquire a strong second line of defence among them, based largely on vegetarianism, purity in hygienic matters and devotional songs. The movements were in essence other-worldly; but they implied the social purpose of raising the status of the tribals thereby. The confidence so generated led to such a revival that even political independence was asserted. Tribal revolts in India have thereby a history older than the freedom movement itself.

#### Private Communication

Along with this, there developed a habit of meeting the police and the army at all odd hours. The tribals seemed to have developed strong channels of private communication and an intense suspicion of the authorities. Only the social workers, firstly in the sacred sphere and then in the secular sphere, seemed to arouse their sympathy. The administration was alien, coercive and suspect in their eyes. In some parts of the country where the heavy hand of the law operated, the tribals added fear to their dimension of the image of the government; in others where seclusion was more effective, they seemed to have thought

5. Ripon's Resolution of May 18, 1892 para 5.

of alternative governments. Such homogeneous political units were not to be found in rural India, except in certain areas where some castes clearly outnumbered others.

The introduction of adult franchise for local bodies was effected and popularized through a slow process. The first stage was practically that of nomination, then of a semi-elected body, and finally of elected representatives. In terms of franchise, some States like Baroda introduced property and educational qualifications.<sup>6</sup> Since independence, adult franchise has in effect meant the overcoming of such property and education limiting factors. In the case of voters, adult franchise has broadbased the democratic pattern; in case of candidates seeking election or getting elected to the posts, the situation is a bit different.

### Background

A study conducted by the Planning Evaluation Organization of Rajasthan<sup>7</sup> brings out the socio-economic background of the village sarpanchas, the block pradhans and the zilla pramukhs. These represent the persons heading the three tiers of the democratic polity. The State which had, in general, literacy percentage at 15.21 in 1961 had 63.96 per cent of the sarpanchas as 'neo-literates'; at the block-level 51.4 per cent of the pradhans had education above this standard but 'under-matric'; and at the district level 86.8 per cent had passed the matriculation examination. The wider one moves from the village through the block to the district, one finds scope for the more educated sections to come to power positions.

The same is the situation with regard to income-groups. At the

village level, 54.54 per cent of the leaders fell in the income category of Rs. 1000-2000 per annum; at the block level 49.6 per cent came in the category 'Rs. 3000 and above'; whereas at the district level, 73.3 per cent were recorded in that category. The larger percentage in the higher income group marks the feature of leadership as one moves from the village to the district level.

In terms of occupational background, one finds a trend towards leadership getting away from the agricultural base. At the village level, the agriculturists accounted for 87.04 per cent of the leaders, at the block level 68.7 and at the district level only 33.3. The wider the area of operation, the lesser the role of agriculture in providing leadership; that seems to be the hypothesis emerging from these data.

### Power Focus

In so far as community development schemes are linked with raising food-production, the decision whether, in areas like those of Rajasthan, the district or the block should be the main focus of power would materially affect the chance of agriculturists leading the programme of community development. The group that seems to gain in representation as one moves from the village to the district levels of power-positions is that of 'business' from 8.6 to 15.7 and then to 20.0 per cent. The 'service' class becomes significant as one moves from the block (1.7 per cent) to the district (13.4 per cent.) These responses indicate that the complexity of the polity at the block and the district level is an adequate field for the more educated, the wealthier, and the non-agricultural group to assume control over power positions.

The rise of these power groups for controlling and guiding the activities of the poorer, agricultural, neo or illiterate masses provides a case of the emerging rural and town elite who would work as spokesmen of the masses and make

representations on their behalf through all the formalities of an administration. In a society where the gap between the principal and the agent is so heavily loaded in the latter's favour, the agent is bound to pre-empt the principal, or at best to make the principal his dependent. Even though the voters exist as voters, their approach to the administration has to be through those representatives who cannot be assumed to be without holding personal interests in the matter.

### Judicial Impact

In the field of judicial activities, the panchayats were supposed to deliver justice based on the personal knowledge of the facts of the case. The traditional tribal and caste panchayats in fact worked that way. The method of consensus marked the proceedings and, at times, the help of respectable persons of other castes was sought to decide cases. In the princely and feudal order, the chiefs in most cases upheld the judgment of the caste panchayats, although in the actual proceedings of the case some representative of the rural landlord happened to be present. But the laws that had to be administered related to caste (sub-caste) codes. In the present set-up, the panchayats are expected to take decisions in civil and criminal cases according to the procedures established through the law of the land. It is possible now to divide the country into regions or classify villages according to the varying intensity with which they use and practise formal legal measures. On the one extreme, one comes across a situation where nearly three-fourths of the cases are settled outside the court through mutual agreement among the parties; on the other, certain families consider it a normal situation to be always involved in one legal case or the other.

In areas where the landed aristocracy or the middle-class was associated with large recruitments to the police or the army for such a long time that quite a few retired persons are available on the spot and where kinship provides

6. Panchanadikar, C. and Panchanadikar J. M. 'Democratic Structure and adjustment process in Panchayati Raj bodies — A Case Study of Mindhola Village Panchayat in Gujarat' in George Jacob (ed.) *Readings on Panchayati Raj*, Hyderabad, National Institute of Community Development, 1967 pp. 1-2.

7. Evaluation Organization, Government of Rajasthan, *The Pattern of Rural Development in Rajasthan*, Jaipur, Government Central Press, 1963, pp. 103-106.



the reference group with which prestige and new attainments are compared, the many complications of the law-courts seem to be rehearsed all the time on the rural scene.

#### **Extra-rural Connections**

In these situations, an extension of community development activities also tends to reach the competitors for power; connections with the administration tend to increase; and these extra-rural connections are then used for bolstering up one's prestige and power over one's nearest rival. The administration is now questioned, but more in relation to one's immediate competitor than on any other ground. In seeking added strength to one's position, the cooperation of the elected member on any feasible ground of a traditional society—kinship, friendship, locality-based relationship, or school ties—is sought. The elected members have to seek their own bases of power and act accordingly. The timing of local and State elections and the frequency of elections to different types of bodies, and in some cases to parties, have made new alignments necessary.

Increasing political opportunities at the rural level have drawn more and more people into the contests for power positions. Success in these contests to a large extent depends upon one's ability to act beyond one's village and, in fact, to act as a linkman between the village and the administration on the one hand, and the informal and the formal procedures on the other. With decentralization of power, the devolution of formal procedures on the administrative and the legal sides have come down to the rural level. The political parties as formal organizations have, as yet, not made a deep impact upon the rural scene; and many a time one listens to arguments that 'parties' are a synonym for groups at fight, and that the glory of rural unity tends to stand jeopardized should parties infiltrate the rural areas.

Rural areas and more specially the tribal areas, are known to be

such social entities in which religious and popular movements tend to succeed more than organizations; and here again the personal charismatic qualities of the leader rather than the normal mode of organization seem to catch the eye and enthusiasm of the people. If one were to trust the reports of the work done in special weeks or fortnights, one would come to the conclusion that these arrangements are more productive than regular work spread over a year. Not merely is agriculture seasonal, every activity seems to be of that variety. Repeated charismatic events rather than the working of formal organizations seem to provide the strategy for the administration as well as the political parties. There are rainy seasons for people to reach the voters and to reap the harvest.

The Indian National Congress had left the princely States to evolve their own strategies for freedom for a pretty long time; Goans and Kashmiris and tribals in the eastern region were left out of the vortex of the freedom struggle. At the rural level, again, political parties hardly developed programmes and units of their own. The consequence has been that whatever channels were available to the people for unorganized mass movements, including institutions in the traditional sector of life, began to be used for modern purposes. The extent to which formal structures of political parties get stabilized in the village would be the extent to which democratic channels would be available to the people.

#### **Organised Forums**

On the administrative side, if one were sure of the impersonal functioning of the bureaucracy (or at least as vocal about the lack of its proper functioning as people of the stature of Badruddin Tyabji and Anand Narain Mulla have been), one might not be looking for 'helpers' to perform 'secretarial practice' for them. At the rural level, one finds the increasing need for intermediaries between the administration and the people. What if the patwari has

been replaced or supplemented by the village level worker; the feudal lord by a representative chosen in an election (at times they are not even different; the real man who needs the help of the administration has always to approach some one through some one. Not merely is a government official expected to approach the villagers through the V.L.W. and the patwari but even a social science researcher, is advised to follow this 'proper channel'. Here even the urban area does not seem to have inspired sufficient confidence in the impersonality of treatment and the 'servicing' aspect of the administration; but the remedy seems to lie ultimately in the growth of a further division of labour, of specialized interests, of increased wealth and education of the masters and the articulation of their needs through organized forums.

#### **Transitional Period**

The country is passing through a transition along that direction but in the transitional period the initiative lies with the political parties which have to understand that organized opinion on either side is more significant than an amorphous one; that charismas and crises situations have to be replaced by organized effort sustained over a longer time through associational work right up to the grass-roots level, that voters have to be won over rather than be fooled; and that dissenters are as honourable as those in power—that in fact these roles are expected to be changed every now and then as a normal course. The bureaucracy too has to be really bureaucratic in essentials and outgrow personal considerations.

How these two agencies of modernization can be activated along those lines is a question beyond the scope of this review; but it needs to be stated that, during the transition, what happens on these two fronts will materially affect the rural scene and that less benefits will accrue in expecting the grass-roots to initiate major changes in the polity.

# Trusteeship and power

J. P. PARRY

A good many recent studies of Indian politics have underlined the importance of caste in determining political alliances and the pattern of voting. Srinivas, Harrison and the Rudolphs among others have laid great emphasis on this aspect of the Indian political scene. On the other hand, journalists and political scientists have frequently drawn our attention to the importance of language, religion and regionalism in the politics of various parts of the country, and social anthropologists to the influence of the patron-client relationship in determining

the way in which individuals vote. Although these writers may emphasize different factors, there is one very striking thread which runs all the way through this analysis. What they all seem to be describing is a politics which is highly structured by a small number of factors which have their roots in the traditional society—caste, religion, language and so on. This would appear to give Indian politics a rather formal quality—even a certain predictability.

A second trend in the analysis of Indian politics leaves one with

an impression which is exactly the opposite of this. I am thinking particularly of Brass's study of factional politics in the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh and Nicholas's study of factionalism at the village level in Bengal. Here we find that politics seems to be completely unstructured and that there is no consistent principle of recruitment to political groups other than personal enmity and a careful calculation of material and political gain. There is certainly no very obvious structural principle of recruitment.

### Causal Relationship

What are we to make of this apparent contradiction? Here, I want to suggest that there may be a causal relationship between a politics which takes place in the idiom of caste and localism at the grass-roots level and an apparently structureless horse-trading sort of politics at higher levels. It is a truism that the content and style of politics goes through a transformation between one political arena and another—between the village and the district and the district and the State. But what I want to say is rather different. As I see it, the importance of caste—and more particularly of localism—at the lowest level of political organization may directly inhibit the development of a politics which proceeds according to any structural principle at the higher levels. I suspect that the process which I shall describe, although certainly not a universal feature of Indian politics, is all the same very widespread.

The material which I want to talk about is drawn from the fieldwork I am currently doing in Tehsil Palampur, a subdivision of District Kangra in Himachal Pradesh. The tehsil covers an area of 724 square miles and has a population of roughly 1,81,500. It is divided into four Community Development Blocks and also four Assembly constituencies.

In the general elections, caste is of crucial importance in district Kangra. Candidates are particularly keen to bring influential caste

leaders into their camp and more often than not a voter is approached by party workers from his own caste rather than by the candidate himself. During the last general elections the leaders of several castes summoned meetings of their caste fellows with the idea of forging a united front in the elections.

One of the Assembly constituencies in the tehsil was declared a reserved seat for the Scheduled Castes. This put the Kolis in something of a dilemma. The Kolis are classified as a Scheduled Caste and are traditionally regarded as untouchable. But over the last fifty years or so they have been sanskritizing their customs and pushing the claim—with a certain amount of success—that they are really of clean caste status and were degraded to their present position by the whim of an autocratic Raja for a minor breach of caste orthodoxy. Their problem was that if they put up a candidate in the election for the Scheduled Caste seat, then this would look like an admission of their inferior status. But if they failed to put up a candidate then they would be denying themselves all the advantages of having an MLA of their own caste.

### Caste Manoeuvres

To resolve this dilemma a series of caste councils were called and those in favour of contesting the constituency won the day. A further series of meetings were subsequently held in order to agree on a single candidate for the Congress ticket who would contest the election with the united support of the whole caste. (In fact this common platform never materialised and four of the six candidates who eventually contested the seat were Kolis. One of them told me that if he was elected his main object would be to get the Kolis removed from the list of Scheduled Castes. The irony of doing this from a Scheduled Caste seat did not apparently strike him).

Political parties consistently take into account the caste com-

position of a constituency when they choose their candidates. A young lawyer, previously unknown in district politics and unattached to any party, was given the Congress ticket to fight from a constituency in a part of the district in which he was a comparative stranger. He candidly attributes his success—both in getting the ticket and winning the election—to the fact that he belongs to the majority caste of that constituency. Again, before the Congress Party announced their slate of candidates, it was widely predicted that a Koli and not a Chamar would be picked for the Scheduled Caste constituency in Tehsil Palampur since the high castes would be extremely reluctant to vote for a Chamar. As one Rajput friend of mine put it: 'If we have a Koli then at least we will be able to sit on the same bed as our MLA.' Popular prediction turned out to be accurate.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the importance of caste in the politics of District Kangra is the presence of what certain members of the local intelligentsia refer to as 'sputniks'. These are candidates who have no real chance of success and whose campaigns are tacitly supported and allegedly financed by another candidate standing from the same constituency with the idea of drawing off votes from a rival. For example, in one of the Assembly constituencies in the subdivision a Communist Party candidate—who is a Rajput by caste—was reckoned to have good support among the low caste tenants. It is said that the candidacy of two of the contestants in the election was set up by his real rivals on the calculation that these 'sputnik' candidates would cream off votes from their own castes—votes which would otherwise have gone to the Communist.

### Power Concentration

Since political and economic power in Tehsil Palampur is largely concentrated in the hands of the Rajputs and Brahmins it is common for rival candidates in an election to belong to the same

caste. The appeal of wide inclusive categories like Rajput or Brahmin is then neutralised and the subdivisions within the category assume great importance. The Rajputs are divided into several hundred clans and these clans are grouped into four classes or *baradris*. The clans of a single *baradri* are reckoned to be equal in status and to some extent share a distinctive style of life. The rule of marriage is that daughters are given to men of the *baradri* above or to men of your own *baradri*, and wives are taken either from the *baradri* below or from your own *baradri*. In one of the Palampur Assembly constituencies the two principal contestants were Rajputs of different *baradris*. In this election an attempt was made to mobilise support along the lines of these classes.

### Canvassing

There is, however, a limit to the extent to which this can be successful since each clan is linked by numerous marriage ties to clans of different *baradris*. One of the most common ways of canvassing the support of a group of voters is to seek out the help of one of their affines and the chances are that he will belong to a different *baradri*. Because of the pattern of marriage alliances a voter will often find it as easy to identify himself with a candidate of a different *baradri* as with a candidate of his own *baradri*. The same goes for the Brahmins who are also grouped into a series of hierarchically ranked classes linked by marriage.

In Gram Panchayat elections, categories like Rajput or Brahmin are most often totally irrelevant since all the candidates are drawn from the caste which is dominant within the panchayat area. Of the ten panchayats in the immediate area in which I live all have Rajput Sarpanches and during the last elections all the rival candidates were also Rajputs.

Srinivas has argued that the Pax Britannica and improved communications gave caste an opportunity to organize on a scale previously unknown and that,

more recently, the electoral system has given fresh impetus to caste by encouraging small localised groups to merge with like units in the political field on an ever wider and more inclusive basis. As I see it, however, there is one important factor which greatly inhibits this process and limits the importance of caste in elections. This is a localism which is imposed on the voters by the fact that the MLA controls much sought after patronage. During the general elections in Tehsil Palampur, questions which could be described as 'policy issues' were of very minor importance. What most of the voters were really concerned about was a school for their village, a water-supply scheme, electricity, a road or jobs for their sons. The sitting MLAs were accused either of neglecting their constituencies altogether or of developing only their own villages. A cabinet minister from the Tehsil was defeated largely because it was felt that only his own area had received any benefits and it was said that he stopped various projects in other parts of the constituency in order to divert resources there.

### Criteria for Votes

The MLA's control of patronage tends to limit the pervasiveness of caste in the electoral process. Jobs can be, and undoubtedly frequently are, given to individuals on the basis of their caste. But a road, a school, electricity or a water-supply scheme can be given only to villages or hamlets and not, directly at least, to individuals or caste groups. Since this is the major concern of much of the electorate there is a tendency for votes to go to the candidate whom the voters feel will bring these things to *their* village and usually this means the candidate who comes from their own immediate area regardless of his caste. Alternatively, it may mean the candidate who is reputed to have the confidence of important State-level leaders who have a major influence in the allocation of development funds.

In British days, real power in the rural areas was vested in

the bureaucrats and their semi-official representatives like the Zaildar and Lamberdar, and in the caste councils and lineage elders. Since independence, power has increasingly shifted into the hands of the people who control the new institutions—the Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishad, the cooperative societies and the District Bank, the party organizations at the district level and the Assembly seats. Several students of Indian politics have noted this multiplication in the structures of power and have argued that the people who control these new structures come from a correspondingly wider range of social strata. In Tehsil Palampur, however, the striking thing is that although there has been a proliferation in the number of posts to which power is attached, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of individuals who control these posts. In other words, all these institutions have tended to pass into the control of the same tiny circle of people. It is the members of this oligarchy who really make decisions on the Panchayat Samitis, who represent the subdivision on the Zila Parishad and the district and Subdivision Advisory Committees, control the cooperative societies and who have the ear of the MLAs and the important officials in the district bureaucracy.

### Power Wielders

Who are the members of this oligarchy? I reckon that there are not more than twenty five people, including the six MLAs who have their homes in the tehsil, the four chairmen of the panchayat samitis, and the Chairman of the Zila Parishad who is also from Palampur, who exercise real power within the area. Most of the oligarchs are either Rajputs or Brahmins. Almost without exception they come from literate families and about half of them have been to a college, or university. Usually their fathers were petty officials in government service or connected with the administration as Zaildars and as often as not they come from families

which were also influential in the subdivision at the beginning of this century. In economic status and in age (mostly they are between forty and sixty) they represent a remarkably homogenous group.

The members of this political oligarchy participate in nearly every election either as candidates or canvassers, and even the most firmly entrenched leader ignores their influence at his peril. A number of them have been associated with a particular political party over a long period but as great a number switch between political parties with startling rapidity. One prominent Samiti chairman supported, during the last general election, the Congress candidate in one constituency, the Jana Sangh, candidate in a second and an Independent in a third. Even those who are firmly committed to one political party are likely to exert an influence in the internal affairs of a different party. This came out into the open recently at the election of a delegate to the Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee when the Jana Sangh leaders put their weight behind one of the candidates.

#### Unstable Alliances

Alliances between members of the oligarchy tend to display a remarkable instability. Coalitions are formed regardless of any consistent structural principle and ties of caste, locality or class are almost totally irrelevant when we consider any given coalition. In many cases those of one party will support a candidate of a different party. The main consideration with the oligarchs when they make an alliance is that they should be a member of the winning coalition, or that they should give their support to a candidate in this election in return for his support for them in the next election.

On the whole, the electorate takes the manoeuvres of its leaders for granted. Even though the people may have voted for a particular leader because he is a member of their caste, they are

not in the least surprised or perturbed when the leader himself acts in defiance of caste solidarity. So long as the leaders don't outrage caste sentiments too directly—for instance by openly eating with low caste people in the villages (something which even the Communists are not prepared to risk with castes lower than Koli)—they are left to make alliances as they see fit.

#### Shrewd Calculation

How is it that when we consider the leader-follower relationship, political support seems to be clearly structured by considerations like caste, clanship, affinity and localism; yet deals between leaders are devoid of these sorts of considerations and seem to proceed only from a shrewd calculation of political advantage? This is not a simple question of values. The oligarchy is drawn from a strata of society which has undoubtedly had the greatest opportunities to assimilate 'modern' westernized ideas and values in which considerations of caste and localism have no place. However, to a very great extent, although there are one or two notable exceptions, the oligarchs share rather shame-facedly in the fundamental precepts of the traditional society.

Riker has made an illuminating comparison between the position of a politician and that of a trustee. The morality enjoined on the trustee is something different from the morality of the individual. He is given one all important moral standard: to maximize profits. If the individual decides that he is not going to invest in South African company shares which are highly profitable because he disapproves of Apartheid, it is up to him. The trustee on the other hand has no right to such sensibilities. He is not allowed the luxury of deciding right from wrong. If the individual makes a large enough contribution to charity he is publicly honoured; but if the trustee gives a mite then he is prosecuted. Similarly, the politician acts as an agent and not as a principal and the fiduciary morality constrains him to behave

in such a way as to maximise profits.

#### Decisive Factors

The profits with which the political principals (the electorate) in Tehsil Palampur are largely concerned are schools, roads, jobs and so on. The leader is then forced to make those alliances which will be most profitable to him in terms of access to the patronage which can provide these goods. The sanction against irrationality in terms of these objectives is elimination from the political arena. Irrationality would consist in giving support to a candidate because he belongs to your caste or to a party with which you sympathize. If a candidate receives votes from the members of his caste because they reckon they will be first in line for jobs if he is elected, or from the people of his neighbourhood because they see this as the best way of getting a school, then he incurs certain obligations. These obligations may force him to make alliances in defiance of caste and locality although he owes his position as a leader to an appeal to these factors. Similarly, these constraints on the leader are likely to inhibit him from developing a consistent loyalty to a political party and may even block the development of stable political parties as they are known in the west.

There are undoubtedly a great many factors which contribute to the current instability in the State Assemblies and at the lower levels of political organization. Clearly there are more than a few instances of leaders acting in ways which contradict not only the values of the traditional system and the modern system but also the fiduciary morality. In other words, there are certainly leaders who act purely out of motives of personal profit. What I suggest however is that many of the manoeuvres which newspapers piously describe as 'political opportunism' are a reflection of the need of the leader to stay close to the centres of power—a need imposed by his position as a trustee.

# Educational development

R. C. PRASAD

INSUFFICIENT attention has so far been paid to the examination of the significance of the variable of education in the determination of the relationships between society and politics in the process of national development. Education, like adult franchise, is a most fundamental source of social change and political development in a modernising society. Universal adult franchise has given political power to the mass of the people; universal education has gradually helped them realise the value of this power and has given them the skill to use it to their advantage.

This paper is designed to assess the political consequences of educational development in a highly stratified society. It also seeks to suggest that, even though the output of the educational system may appear to be a source of de-stabilization for the political order in the short run, it may ultimately function as a source of political energy to enliven the other segments of the political system.

Our analysis takes its clue from the experience in the State of Bihar. In Bihar, educational development has taken place in the context of caste-ridden politics. Nevertheless, the emerging educational system seems to be gradually developing a logic of its own, and is struggling to assert its own autonomous role in the political development of the State.

The 'province' of Bihar was created in 1912 in response to a

movement for its separation from Bengal. The separation movement was fed largely on the feeling that the educationally equipped young men of Bihar did not get proper opportunity for gainful employment in the face of competition with Bengali young men.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps by sheer coincidence, most of the leaders of the movement for separation belonged to the Kayastha caste.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the reason, of the people who were privileged to receive English education and adopt the western style of life, the Kayasthas were by far the most sizable amongst the first generation of Biharis. Naturally, therefore, the Kayasthas, as a caste, emerged as the largest beneficiary of the separation of Bihar and Orissa from Bengal.

The separation of Bihar from Bengal created opportunities for both gainful employment and educational development. In 1917, the

1. A young historian, who has recently examined the process of the creation of Bihar, writes: 'Educated Biharis were discriminated against in matters of service.' He concludes: 'Bihar's continuance as the junior partner of Bengal stifled the very personality of Bihar and worked as a dead weight against all progress and development.' See V. C. P. Choudhary, *The Creation of Modern Bihar* Yugeshwar Prakashan, Patna, 1964, pp. 194-5. Also see *Ibid*, pp. 132-3.

2. Cf. *Ibid*, p. 59. One of the journals, which took active part in the agitation for the separation of Bihar from Bengal, was *The Kayastha Messenger*. *Ibid*, p. 190.

Patna University was created. It provided a momentum for the opening of new colleges and schools. Even people who were careless about education and were wedded primarily to land felt attracted to colleges and universities. This was presumably for two reasons. (1) Caste organizations encouraged their membership to take benefit of the new opportunities of higher education and employment in government service which opened up after the separation of Bihar and Orissa and the creation of the Patna University and the starting of new colleges. (2) During the 1920's, in a situation of falling prices, agriculture proved to be a profitless occupation and even minor employment in government offices could attract educated persons from the land-owning castes.

#### Bhumihar Brahmins

In this flight from the land to government offices, the Bhumihar Brahmins were more in evidence than others. In their drive for educational advancement, the Bhumihar Brahmins, it is said, received much encouragement and philanthropic support from Sir Ganesh Dutt Singh, a minister of the Government of Bihar under the Government of India Act of 1919. The acquisition of both political power and the equipment of modern education brought the traditionally land-owning Bhumihar Brahmins into competition with the Kayasthas. For, the latter had hoped to be almost the sole beneficiary (amongst the Hindu castes)<sup>3</sup> of government employment, once the Bengalis had kept off Bihar after the separation of the province; but this could not happen because of the rise of the Bhumihar Brahmins. Although the people of many other castes joined the race, the

main competition was between the Kayasthas and the Bhumihar Brahmins.

The process of selecting the leadership of the provincial Congress in 1937 led to a sharpening of caste articulation in Bihar politics. Since then, the mobilization of caste as a conscious, though disavowed, process became the principal undercurrent of Congress politics in Bihar. Encouragement to castemen for the acquisition of the intellectual equipment of higher education became a major goal of caste organizations, groups and leaderships. Numerically sizable, politically articulate, and economically well-to-do, the Rajputs followed the Bhumihar Brahmins in the race for political mobilization in a more conscious and planned manner.

Gradually, other castes too followed suit. As a result, the style of caste articulation became increasingly more overt and militant. The process of caste articulation of the Yadavas during the late 1960s provides an illustration in this context. The demand for Congress tickets for the backward castes in proportion to their size on the eve of the 1967 election, gives a more recent illustration of the militant style of articulation of caste interests inside the Pradesh Congress.

#### Political Spoils

The growing urge of each caste for political mobilization through Congress politics has been accompanied by the growth of caste-based institutions of higher education (let alone primary and secondary schools). What was sought to be fostered in a small way in the 1920s through the personal philanthropy of politically powerful castemen was undertaken in a big way by the caste-conscious Congress politicians during the decades following the transfer of power to the Indian National Congress in 1946.

In order to fulfil the desirable goal of spreading education, vast numbers of primary and secondary schools had to be opened by the government. This created an en-

vironment and laid the base for the opening of new colleges and other institutions of technical and higher education. The opening of new colleges also, incidentally, provided scope for the distribution of political spoils amongst highly educated men. For, although every possible effort for tapping job resources for spoils-distribution inside the government departments was made, educational institutions proved the more appropriate sources for three reasons.

Firstly, the principle of merit restricted the free distribution of spoils inside the government offices, while the colleges run and controlled through private governing boards provided abundant scope for unrestricted distribution of jobs to political favourites. Secondly, education, especially higher education, was viewed as the primary instrument for imparting modern skills to one's 'own' men and enhancing their competitive ability in diverse spheres including politics. Attempts were, therefore, made to 'capture' the governing boards of private colleges alongside the efforts to establish new colleges. Thirdly, and more importantly, the opening of caste-oriented colleges and schools provided the individual Congress politicians with a base of operation in his 'area'. Every politician of significance with the knack of tapping resources for starting a college, therefore, liked to establish one of his own, either singly or jointly with other 'like-minded' politicians.

#### Proliferation

In the years following independence, a large number of colleges sprung up in several parts of the State. Also, new universities were brought into being. In 1952, the Patna University was converted into a residential university, and a new University of Bihar was created to grant affiliation to the privately-run colleges. Under pressure from politically influential persons, the University of Bihar adopted a liberal approach in regard to grants of affiliation to private colleges. Actually, the number of colleges grew so fast

3. A sizeable proportion of forward Muslim castes was another important group of beneficiaries of government employment after the creation of Bihar. See, on this point, A. N. Sinha, *Mere Samsmaran* (My Reminiscences), Kusum Prakashan, Patna, 1961. p. 57.

that towards the end of the fifties the Education Department of the State worked out schemes for creating a university for each of the four divisions.

Since 1960, educational development has played a turbulent role in the political development of the State. The framing of the Bihar Universities Act in 1960 caused much resentment in the Patna University. The Act converted the University of Patna, which functioned for eight years as a wholly residential university with no affiliating colleges, into a regional and affiliating university, like the other three universities of Bihar, Bhagalpur and Ranchi. The teachers of Patna University viewed the new character of their institution as a downgrading of its status. They also developed the misgiving that the provision for apportionment, which stipulated the transfer of personnel amongst the different universities, would be used to upset the existing caste-structure of the university with a view to effecting a new balance in favour of the Bhumihar Brahmins. The Bhumihar Brahmin Deputy Education Minister was then known to control the Education Department more effectively than the Brahmin Education Minister himself.

#### Sudden Turn

Within a year of the passing of the Act of 1960, however, the leadership of Congress politics changed, following the death of Chief Minister S. K. Sinha. The control suddenly slipped from the hands of the Bhumihar Brahmins to a Brahmin-Rajput alliance<sup>4</sup> and a powerful Rajput minister took charge of education. Imme-

diately after his assumption of office, the new Education Minister, S. N. Sinha, made a large-scale 'about-turn' in educational administration.<sup>5</sup> The major burden of his entire efforts was to dismantle certain structures in the educational administration built up by his predecessor, without which the political entrenchment of the Bhumihar Brahmins in educational institutions could not be overcome. And only by the building up of new structures in educational administration could the new politically powerful castes entrench themselves enduringly in the field of education.

#### Changed Pattern

Several very important decisions of the new government betrayed this approach. The Universities Act was amended, and Patna University was reverted to its 1952-60 residential-teaching pattern. And to control the colleges of the Patna division falling out of Patna University, a new university, known as Magadh University, was created, with its administrative offices at Gaya, the headquarters town of the home district of the new Education Minister. Further, a University Service Commission was created to control appointments of teachers in privately-managed colleges. Also, a University (Grants) Commission was brought into being to control the growth of private colleges and the universities of the State.

In this way, within a year and a half, several acts of the previous Congress administration were undone. Besides, the vice-chancellors of the universities, appointed a year ago, were replaced by new incumbents. Large-scale transfers of school teachers were ordered with a view to distributing favours (or disfavours). Numerous appointments in privately-managed colleges were invalidated. An avowed purpose was to undo the deeds of the previous education administration.

The Universities Act of 1960 had caused serious dissatisfaction in

Patna University; but the amendment of that Act in 1961 prepared the stage for tremendous disquiet in the University of Bihar at Muzaffarpur. It all arose from the misgiving that the existing power-structure of the university would be dismantled in order to erect a new one commensurate with the structure of power at the State level. While, as explained earlier, the dissatisfaction on this account in Patna University was shortlived, the disquiet in the University of Bihar developed into a full-scale crisis.

Several events followed the appointment of a new Kayastha vice-chancellor after the amendment of the Universities Act in 1961. The syndicate (the governing board) of the university was captured by Rajput politicians, presumably because of the helpfulness of the new vice-chancellor. In an important district college under the University of Bihar, the Principal, believed to be a man of the previous Deputy Education Minister, was suspended. A large-scale leakage of examination papers for the M.A. examinations occurred in a most demonstrative manner. Several student strikes took place and the students made several attempts even to humiliate the vice-chancellor; they also disturbed the university convocation of 1964. Thus, the normal life and work in the university was seriously affected.

#### Enquiry Commission

To inquire into the affairs of the university, a one-man inquiry commission was appointed by the Chancellor. A citizens Fact-Finding Committee presented to the Commission a long printed document, *The Colonization of a University*,<sup>6</sup> pointing to a large number of cases of favours and disregard of the rule of law. A running theme of the document was to demonstrate how the Kayasthas (V.C.'s caste) and the Rajputs (the Education Minister's

4. The Bhumihar Brahmins are regarded as a caste different from the Brahmins. While the latter consider the former inferior in the social hierarchy, the former regard themselves on par with the latter. The Bhumihar Brahmins regard the adjectival part of their name as only functional, since they happen to be owning and cultivating land. During the 1920's and 30's, a movement started under which the Bhumihar Brahmins reasserted their right of reading the Vedas and performing religious rituals unaided by the Brahmins.

5. See *The Hindustan Times*, September 6, 1961, p. 7.

6. Chairman, P. N. Mehta. Published by the Citizens Fact-Finding Committee, Muzaffarpur, this document was brought out in August, 1964.



caste) got out-of-turn appointments and promotions inside the university at the cost of the Bhumihar Brahmins (who controlled the university till then) and others.<sup>7</sup>

### The New Universities

While the University of Bihar was in turmoil, the other universities presented a relatively quiet look. It would, however, be misleading to infer from this that caste-ridden Congress politics made no impact on the other newly created universities. For one thing, sporadic incidents of clashes between student caste-groups were reported also from other universities and their colleges.<sup>8</sup> For another, the newer universities took time before structures of interest could be erected in the new set-up; for, the old structures, built up in the context of the larger University of Bihar, dismantled automatically in the smaller context of the new regional universities created in 1960.

Magadh University, which was created in 1962, emerged as a case *sui generis*. This university was organized under the political tutelage of the Rajput Education Minister (1961-66), when he was at the zenith of his power. The political structure of Magadh University therefore acquired a decisively Rajput overtone.<sup>9</sup> Because of the absence of any in-built opposition, the influential positions in the new university were captured with amazing smoothness and speed by Rajputs and Brahmins who, at the time of the for-

mation of Magadh University, were in alliance with the State Congress. The Brahmin influence in the politics of the university was however shortlived because of power convulsions and factional realignments in the State Congress.<sup>10</sup>

The Rajput hegemony over the higher education of the State, however, persisted with diminishing effect until the fourth general elections. The diminution of their influence in university politics, even before the election, was caused both by adverse public reaction and by the growing influence of the Yadav-led backward castes in the intra-party politics of the State Congress. It was not wholly incidental, then, that after the fourth general elections the education portfolio went into the hands of a 'backward' caste minister. Public opinion would have reacted adversely if a Rajput or a Bhumihar Brahmin minister had been given charge of education. (Actually, it did so react during the short period of Soshit Dal rule when a Rajput minister took charge of education).

### United Front's Move

The United Front Education Minister took steps to initiate new changes in the structure of the universities. Before, however, some changes sought through an Ordinance could be given statutory shape the Front coalition found itself out of office. Thus, there failed to emerge a clear picture of the advantages that these changes would have given to the 'backward' castes. Nevertheless, the United Front Education Minister did lay stress on primary and secondary education, an approach clearly in the greater and more immediate interest of the 'backward' castes.

Again, in the new United Front Government of Bhola Paswan Shastri, a harijan, the portfolio

of education has not been (and perhaps will not be) given to any upper caste minister. A great many changes are awaited in the field of higher education, and these may be used to help serve the interests of lower castes. As it seems, education, including higher education is now likely to be increasingly used as an instrument of mobilization of 'backward' castes to be followed by the scheduled castes; as it has so far been done in the case of the upper castes.<sup>11</sup> That the process of mobilization of the lower castes is already under way is confirmed by several instances of out-of-turn appointments, transfers, and promotions in the State government during the last four or five years. The impact of this process on higher education was not felt in a pronounced manner in the area of higher education because of the fact that, until March 1967, education was in the charge of a Rajput minister.

In the caste-conscious political universe of the State, the actual decision-makers did not perhaps care to calculate the long-term political consequences of educational development. Their interest lay in the political mobilization of their own caste so as to enhance its political competence and competitiveness. As a matter of fact, few could foresee that the educational system would ultimately develop its own logic and might play its own 'autonomous' role in the political system.

### Ill-equipped Institutions

The race for opening new caste-controlled institutions of higher education resulted in the fast multiplication of ill-equipped colleges and universities. The source of sustenance of these colleges was the income derived from tuition fees. These colleges were therefore

7. As Shils reports, 'Intercommunal and intertribal animosities bedevil many universities from Nigeria to Malaysia'. See Edward Shils, 'Modernization and Higher Education' in Myron Weiner (Ed.), *Modernization: The Dynamics of Growth* (VOA Forum Lectures, 1966) p. 98.

8. A caste riot took place in a premier college of the Magadh University in 1963. A similar incident, in a more violent form, took place there again in 1967.

9. A large number of letters written to the editor of the *Indian Nation* bring to public notice the caste-complexion of Magadh University. For example, see *Indian Nation* of September 21 and 25, 1967.

10. B. N. Jha, the Brahmin Chief Minister, came out of the government in 1963, under the Kamaraj Plan. Also, the Rajput-Brahmin alliance gave way to a Rajput-Bhumihar Brahmin alliance, helping K. B. Sahay to assume Chief Ministership in 1963.

11. This, in a way, confirms Huntington's conclusions: 'In general, the more highly stratified a society is and the more complicated its social structure, the more gradual is the process of political mobilization. Thus, mobilization should be slower in India than in the new African States.' See Samuel P. Huntington, 'Political Development and Political Decay', *World Politics*, XVII (April 1965), p. 419.

forced to admit numbers of students far beyond their capacity in terms of equipment and facilities. Even so, most of them could hardly pay the salaries of their teachers regularly. The number of students coming out of these ill-equipped colleges and new universities began to multiply.

### Educated Idlers

Since 1960, particularly, the rate of multiplication has been much faster. On an average, each of these universities add roughly two thousand heads per year to the mass of educated 'idlers' of Bihar's towns and villages.<sup>12</sup> Two hundred and thirty thousand young men were recorded as unemployed in 1967. Of these, 27,000 were recorded in one month alone (May 1967).<sup>13</sup> In the rural areas, especially, their number has grown very fast: throughout the State, almost every village would now claim to possess a number of 'educated idlers'. The majority of these people belong to the first generation in their families to have received some kind of higher education. They came to the college in the hope that 'through education (their) lives...will be transfigured and improved.'<sup>14</sup> These young men had hoped to join the prestigious company of persons in 'white collar' jobs. Frustrated, they now consider themselves good for nothing; for they feel shy also of joining their fathers and uncles in the traditional occupation of their family.

The political efficacy of these 'educated idlers' of the villages and the towns has, nonetheless,

proved to be of great systemic importance. Especially in the rural areas, their role as makers of local opinion, as link-men between the politicians and bureaucrats and the common people of the village, as local managers of the panchayat, the State, and national elections, and as newcomers to representative institutions has been gradually recognized. Because of them, the people of the villages have been gradually politicized and even in several areas politically polarized. The impact of their thrust into the political life of the State was experienced on a wide scale on the eve of the fourth general elections in a subtle revolutionary manner.

### Anti-Congressism

The anti-Congress wave on the eve of the February 1967 elections was, in fact, spearheaded by those in educational institutions: universities, colleges and high schools. Ironically enough, most of these institutions were established to articulate and foster the modernizing interests of the various castes and to reinforce the political base of the individual Congress leaders in the context of the caste-oriented politics of the Pradesh Congress. The school and college 'leavers' of the villages and towns, who were already disenchanted with the Congress system, joined the wave and became the organizational tool of the parties and candidates against the Congress, both in the towns and in the countryside.

Thus, the universities of the State, and the colleges under them, have operated as the prime movers of new political changes. No doubt, the growing economic distress caused by rising prices and food scarcity, has exaggerated the pace of these changes. But the more perceptive observers must have visualised such a development even at the beginning of the life of the new universities. At any rate, they would have caused such changes in ten years, if not sooner. For, the multiplication of 'educated idlers' at the rate, roughly, of 10,000 a year would have by itself created an alarming

situation: educated idlers are prone to becoming political activists. The economic system and the occupational structure have failed to keep pace with and absorb the output of the educational system. In such a situation, the political orientation of the newly educated unemployed persons is certainly to be marked by disenchantment with the political system or at least with certain parts of the system.<sup>15</sup> Some parts of the economic and the political systems will, it seems, have to undergo modifications.

The Congress debacle is only one spectacular demonstration of the new catalytic role of the educational system in our polity. The test strike of 1949, the Patna police firing and the accompanying student agitation of 1955, the incidents connected with the Bihar Bundh of 1965, the anti-Congress wave prior to the 1967 elections, and the massive teachers' strike of March 1968 are all incidents which should not be treated as mere occasional explosions in the campuses. The issues behind these incidents may not always be political, but perhaps almost always they have got mixed up with political ones. And, without doubt, they have had their political consequences. The police firings of 1955, for instance, checked the rise of M. P. Sinha to power: he was defeated in the general elections of 1967. The Bihar Bundh of 1965, which involved the students, heralded the fall of K. B. Sahay.

### Political Consequences

Cumulatively, these incidents have produced some consequences of systemic value. First, they have given confidence to the membership of the educational community and have spurred their political competence. Second, the educational system has got increasingly linked up with the political system. Third, although expanded in the context of the political

12. Actually, this is an all-India phenomenon. See: University Grants Commission, *Report on Standards of University Education* (New Delhi, 1965), p. 15. The All-India figure of annual increase in the 1960's is one lakh a year. *Ibid.*, p. 136. Also see *Report of the Education Commission* (India), (Delhi: 1966), pp. 300-01.

13. This is based on official reports. See *The Indian Nation*, September, 21 1967, p. 3.

14. Shils confirms this to be true of most developing nations. See Shils, 'Modernization and Higher Education', *op. cit.*, p. 99.

15. The process seems to have wide applicability. See, in this connection, James S. Coleman, 'Introduction' in J. S. Coleman (ed.) *Educational and Political Development* (Princeton, N.J.: University Press, 1965), pp. 29-30.

mobilization of the various castes, the educational system is acquiring an 'autonomous' role, independent of the social infrastructure, in the political system. Fourth, the educational system has now begun to display its functionality both to the maintenance of the political order and to the development of the political system.

### Catalytic Function

The educational system is now, virtually, competing (and cooperating!) with other sub-systems—bureaucracy, political parties, the army, trade unions, etc.—to assert its catalytic function in the political system. Organized action in the educational campuses, purported to belittle political authority, may have the effect of paralysing the political order as much as any such action on the part of the army, political parties, bureaucracy and trade union systems can have.

What is more important, the educational system also seems to have an additional and distinctive function. It has its bearing more on the development of the political system than on the maintenance of political order. Since, unlike others, the educational system is primarily not an interest-oriented political structure, its catalytic function becomes more important than its other political functions. The educational system is a source of political energy, which may enliven other segments of the political system. This is why it may at times appear that its order-maintenance function conflicts with its catalytic function.

The political energy which is displayed in the educational world should not, therefore, be viewed as essentially disruptive to political order. The catalytic function of the educational system is also bound to acquire legitimacy gradually. Universities have always been recognized as centres of new ideas. Also, as instruments of scientific progress their role has received recognition since long. The recognition, however, of their role as prime movers of social

change and political development is also now overdue. Their functionality to the political system will not be ensured by instituting curbs, in terms of either their population growth or their freedom of action. From a short-term point of view, they may appear to be a source of political de-stabilization; in the long run, however, they would seem to provide the much needed new political energy which is so vitally required for every political system.

### New Society

Part of the output of the educational system, which is not absorbed, in some formal way and for some time, by other sub-systems of society need not be looked at as 'waste', even though it, admittedly, is likely to produce some politically disquieting effects. For one thing, only through an expanded educational system can we hope to become a society of educated men and women so vital to a world getting increasingly complex through scientific and technological progress. For another, the 'extra' output will always create momentum for the society to move ahead even though it will have the extraneous effect of temporarily creating a situation of disorder. Furthermore, as evidence has already begun to accumulate, gradually more educated and enlightened people will come to accept roles even in the 'traditional' occupations and will apply their enlightened mind to make them, socially and personally, more profitable. (The young farmers of Punjab have already shown the way) In this way, hopefully, the expanding educational system may give birth to a society of people imbued with the ideas of equality, science and progress.

Too much mobilization, too much political energy, may, of course, bedevil political order. So, how to arrest the disquieting effects of the expansion of the educational system? Perhaps the answer will be found in both institutional and technological inventions. Such is, then, the challenge of our time.

# Crisis of leadership

S. C. DUBE

IN the political processes of any society, its leadership has several vital roles. It plays a crucial part in the dynamics of decision-making. It influences the setting of

group goals and national objectives and initiates action for their realization. It also sustains group and national interest in the targets to be achieved and solves

foreseen and unforeseen problems in the path of their accomplishment. In the final analysis, its success is judged by its capacity to carry a sizable group with it towards the full or at least partial realization of pre-set objectives.

### Dilemmas and Paradoxes

In mature politics, where the political idiom is crystallized and the political game is played according to well-established and generally observed rules, the elbow room for manoeuvre and manipulation by the leadership is relatively limited. However, the situation in developing societies, where the social infra-structure is not geared to the largely super-imposed political structure, presents a picture of fluidity, which stands out in sharp contrast to that of the more mature systems. In the relative absence of interest articulation and interest aggregation, and within the framework of a still poorly developed system of political communication, the leadership acquires a more critical significance. In the quicksands of politics emphases and strategies change with amazing rapidity. The situation presents a baffling set of dilemmas and paradoxes, and the masses look to the leadership for their solution. The leadership has very considerable manoeuvrability, and it can change its postures and stance with little or practically no questioning from its following.

In many situations, the leadership is not even sensitive and responsive to the people. In some countries, it is vulnerable to public opinion, but the days of judgment with their unpredictable shocks and surprises come after five to seven-year intervals and some leaders hope to ensure their survival by holding out new promises offered in the shape of appealing slogans and attractive programmes. Past utopias and recipes for progress are conveniently forgotten, and new ones are offered with reckless abandon.

Indian democracy, although it has proved itself more stable and

successful than many new democracies in Asia and Africa, is undergoing an acute crisis of leadership. The first two elections in free India were held during the phase of reverent affirmation. In the euphoria of independence, the people had the vision of a glorious future, without any consciousness of the constraints and responsibilities of freedom. Voting was an act of homage to Gandhi, to Nehru, and to the host of freedom fighters who had led the country to national independence. They had fulfilled the promise of freedom and they could be looked upon also to fulfil the promise of prosperity and plenty. The image of the leader continued to be predominantly that of the self-sacrificing patriot, who was a cut above the common man.

### Critical Compliance

By the time of the third general election there was a visible change in the mood of the masses. Their gods had disappointed if not failed them. The performance of the leadership was significantly inadequate on many fronts. Many in their ranks were seen as what they really were—seekers of power trying to entrench themselves in positions of authority, irrespective of their ability to solve problems. Charisma, even of some of the well-established leaders, was vanishing and one by one they were coming down their high pedestals. This was the phase of critical compliance. Frustrations were mounting, but the point of explosion had not been reached. Nehru's charisma—although not wholly untarnished—had survived. Because of him, and also perhaps because people had not seriously looked for an alternative, the party in power was granted an extension in office, although not without reservations.

The temper of the electorate had undergone a violent change at the time of the third general election. Discontent had developed into anger, and the electorate was ready to register a major protest. The ballot was an instrument of

this protest. An alternative was not yet within sight; nevertheless, a massive protest, to many, was in order. The results were unnerving even to those who had, in the past, not ordinarily lost their equanimity and self-confidence. The tenuous course of Indian democracy after this election is too recent to need any recounting. The politics of relentless pressure and mob violence have raised serious misgivings about the suitability of the parliamentary apparatus of democracy to contemporary Indian conditions.

What has been the over-all performance of leadership in India? It has placed before the people a set of national goals and objectives, but because of ineffective channels of communication and organizational inadequacies they have not reached down to the common people. In any case, a sense of commitment to these objectives has not been generated. Its action has often lacked determination and, in consequence, the efforts to implement policies and plans have been shaky and their results have been feeble. Perhaps its greatest failure has been its inability to arouse and sustain interest even in respect of major objectives. Its incapacity to foresee problems was remarkable, and its efforts to handle them were characterized by naivete and indecision. In sum, as an agency of decision-making and decision-enforcement, it fumbled time and again, creating in the minds of people the image of a spineless body that was a prisoner of its own indecision.

### Causes of Failure

In retrospect, an attempt may be made to analyze some of the causes of these failures.

The pre-independence leadership was geared more to solidarity-building than to problem-solving. Agitation was the dominant note of its strategy. Although from among its ranks some individuals emerged with a remarkable capacity for statesmanship, by and

large, the bulk did not attune itself to the demands of the multiplex problems which awaited solution. Many who had outlived their utility were allowed to continue in positions of responsibility. This dead wood of Indian politics used its position of vantage to impart to itself a degree of indispensability. Leadership continued to be functionally diffuse: the climate was unfavourable to the growth of functionally specific leadership.

As a near-abject surrender was expected from those potentially able to provide leadership in problem-solving fields by those in political authority, a complementary leadership could not develop. Thus, the reserves of creative thinking in the country were never exploited. Leaders of yesteryears' agitations took over the many and complex responsibilities for which they were not suited in terms of their experience, knowledge and skill. A section of the leadership, which did not have access to political power, continued to follow agitational methods, without any constructive problem-solving aids.

India's search for a new identity was distracted and disturbed by the inner contradictions in the leadership. Many among those who occupied leadership positions at different levels were all too ready to pay lip service to the ideals preached by the country's two towering leaders, only one of whom lived long enough to mastermind the country's future. Few dissenting voices were raised, but the formal acceptance of Nehru's ideology and programme did not in any sense imply a serious or genuine commitment to them.

#### Parochial Tendencies

The facade of a revolutionary world-view covered a bewildering series of parochial pulls and trends. A few ill-timed concessions contributed immeasurably to the strengthening of parochial tendencies. In the name of pragmatism, narrow and sectional loyalties were exploited to the

detriment of national integration. Casteism, linguism, regionalism, communalism, and tribalism among others were the fruit of myopic strategies which were permitted to be pursued when the country was presumably committed to the very opposite ideals. The injury to the goals of socialism and secularism was perhaps more serious. To many, they were convenient slogans but inconvenient operational philosophies. Massive social action was never engineered to invest a sense of reality into the ideals which were preached. In consequence, today the country lacks a sense of direction. It is significant that many parochial sentiments stealthily exploited by the dominant party are now being openly promoted by those in opposition.

Over the years, the fabric of leadership has undergone a qualitative change. Those who stood by the old ideals of sacrifice and service either voluntarily left active politics to take up humanitarian work of the 'constructive' variety or were eased out of its mainstream. In their place, political 'bosses' emerged, who could control the party machine, organize factional politics, raise funds, and engineer the elections.

#### New Pressures

For many years, the true power of these party bosses remained unrecognized and even the top leaders did not know how far these lesser known but well-entrenched men had spread their tentacles. Their invisible power gradually began to be felt: the interests they represented started asserting themselves. The accepted ideology was never formally renounced, but its implementation showed unmistakable signs of the new pressures.

Of course, the old idealistic fervour could not last indefinitely: in the emerging political scene the politician had to learn to calculate better and to bargain harder. These are features of all mature political systems. However, in the Indian case no limits were set and

no rules of the game were evolved. Pious resolutions were passed from time to time, but changes in policies were also frequent. Exigencies of the given situation often dictated the decision. Thus, many could disregard formally accepted principles and rules with impunity. Recruitment to political roles—especially around the seats of power at different levels—was quick, but the political socialization of the new entrants was characterized by a cognitive dissonance that came in the way of the development of high quality leadership.

Revolt against the power monopoly of one party—or, a reaction to barred doors—swelled the ranks of the growing number of opposition parties, but like the dominant party most of them also lacked inner cohesion. The harassed bosses of the ruling party derived some satisfaction from the divisiveness present in almost all the opposition parties.

#### Emerging Ethos

A disturbing feature of the emerging ethos is the new political style, which is characterized by an almost total lack of restraint and discipline. Attainment of power is one of the principal ends of all political activity, but the means are always governed and conditioned by considerations of legitimacy. The quest for power, ungoverned by rules of legitimacy, has created a situation that looks alarming to a section of the more thoughtful element of the society. Parochial issues are pursued with a passion that deserved a better cause. Scarce resources and national property are destroyed without compunction. Serious national issues meriting rational thought by those who have special knowledge and skills are sought to be decided by mass demonstrations and mob violence. Civic life is paralyzed and production is brought to a standstill on trivial pretexts.

An unfortunate impression has gained ground that only these methods succeed in shaking an

otherwise immobile government out of its inertia. Leaders of thought and action appear to stand by helplessly watching the situation; perhaps they feel that the fury will spend itself and that conditions will return to normal. At any rate there is no convincing evidence of purposeful action to stem the tide of the forces which run counter to all canons of democracy.

#### **At the Grass-roots**

For a long time the macro-political system of India functioned practically as an autonomous system without any organic links with the micro-political systems. National politics was a largely urban phenomenon, and it reached down to the grass-roots only during the elections. Few political parties had a strong mass base in the rural areas. For the purpose of getting votes certain relations in the resource network were geared into action. Rather than create new channels, most parties utilized the existing channels. Appeals were routed mostly through channels of caste and factional affiliation. In some cases appeals to caste sentiments worked, and some caste-clusters voted together; in others, village factions and inter-village faction-chains provided the rallying force. Village leaders, who traditionally functioned as patrons, arbitrators/mediators, and brokers, extended their traditional functions to act as middlemen between macro- and micro-politics. Inter-caste and inter-faction rivalries were often deftly exploited: considerations of adding to their own or to their faction's power weighed more than political convictions with the village leaders.

But power alignments in the villages are imperceptibly changing, and new links are being forged between macro- and micro-politics. Village leaders are becoming increasingly aware of their importance, and the three-tier system of Panchayati Raj institutions has provided them with avenues to participate in the wider political arena. The processes are complex and cannot be comprehended

through simplistic explanations. For example, the notion that dominant castes control 'vote banks' contains several fallacies. Apart from the fact that factions in many villages are more relevant than caste in the context of power, the so-called 'dominant castes' have to make so many vital concessions to the non-dominant groups that they hardly qualify for the appellation given to them.

Caste may provide a convenient rallying point, but power is sought by individuals and considerations of factional gain are not divested from it. A new source of recruitment to political cadres is added, but actual political affiliations are dictated more by considerations of short-run power gains than by long range political objectives. An unintended consequence of the new agricultural policy will perhaps be to strengthen some aspirants for power in the villages to assume increasingly important political roles.

#### **Amorphous System**

India's political system, as it exists today, has an amorphous character. It has links with the traditional social structure, but the two are not enmeshed. They tend to operate in separate spheres: the political system, however, has made important concessions to the social system and has done very little to attune it to a democratic ethos. In the absence of functionally specific interest groups, personalities continue to dominate the political scene and contextual exigencies continue to dominate their strategies. In this personalised order, ideological commitment and articulation are weak, and there is little evidence of their getting stronger. The tasks of reconciliation are becoming increasingly complex and difficult, and the mobilising functions being performed by the elements in the political system are more for short-run, narrow, and parochial objectives than for broader objectives of vital concern to the nation's future. The symptoms of a national malaise are recognized, but no determined therapeutical action appears to be taken about them.

# Factionalism

SHASHISHEKHAR JHA

TO understand India's 'politics and society' one has to realise the significance of 'factions' in the process of mediating between the Indian social structure and the specialised processes of government, law and politics. The poser has rightly observed that our contemporary politics is much better characterised as a system of factional bargaining in which people act on the basis of sound material calculations.

Here an attempt is made to discover what these factions are. The basis of our conceptual formulation is a case study of the factional politics of the Congress leadership in Bihar and the place of caste in it.

Professor Harold D. Lasswell has defined factions as any constituent group of a larger unit which works for the advancement of particular persons or policies.<sup>1</sup> According to Raymond Firth,

factions are those groups or sections of a society which stand opposed to one another and are interested in promoting their own objects rather than those of the society as a whole and afterwards taking a turbulent turn in the course of their operations.<sup>2</sup>

Our study suggests that factions as unstable groups tend to be different from basic groups like family and kinship. Unlike structural units of society, these groups lack cohesion. With a change in the complexion of the faction-situation there is a change in the membership of the factions. With a variation in the interests of the individual members, the instability of these groups becomes prominent. Judged from this aspect, factional politics are personal politics and status politics.

Political factions at the top level tend to be 'interest-oriented'

1. See his essay on 'Faction' in *Encyclopaedia of Social Science*, Vol. VI, p. 49, (1931).

2. See his article 'Factions in India and Overseas Dependencies', in the *British Journal of Sociology*, 8 (1957), p. 292.



rather than 'caste-oriented'. The rise of a faction-situation is itself 'due to a particular 'interest' view' in the context of competitive politics. Interest-orientation is mostly to the fore and factions are composed of multi-caste unstable groups.

### A. Social Process

At the base, the element of conflict or opprobrious relations tend to lie, although there may be occasional attempts towards 'co-operation', 'joining hands' and 'rapprochement', between the two opposing groups. Factionalism in this context may be referred to as a particular type of social process called conflict taking place in a social situation wherein two opposing groups exist. The kind of conflict which sustains the faction-situation at the State level is not generally speaking 'very bitter' perhaps because of the 'fluid' factional system there. But if the system is bifactional the chances are that there will be a situation of extreme bitterness leading to violent clashes.

The factions, as revealed through the study noted above, tend to be vertical structures of power cutting across caste and class divisions.<sup>3</sup> Thus, any definition of factions as semi-permanent groups based on caste, kin, and such traditional ties,<sup>4</sup> may not hold good in all situations. Loyalty to a faction may be one form of loyalty politically important in the traditional order. In Indian village situations, such loyalty to a caste or a lineage group may be important but these traditional ties may not be the only character of factions in all situations.\*

This presents only one variety of the factional system and we observe factions here as political

groupings which are bi-polar in form.\*

Bi-polar factional politics at the State level is quite often denominated as the 'ministerialist group' and the 'dissident group'. The first group is led by the faction leader in power, the Chief Minister, and the second group is led by the opposing factional leader who may or may not be a minister. The situation is marked by fluidity. Today's dissidents are yesterday's ministerialists and today's ministerialists will be tomorrow's dissidents. Even a ministerialist changes sides as soon as he is denied the crumbs of office. The process, it appears, has come to stay and will continue for ever.<sup>5</sup> As the factional activity centres upon securing the 'crumbs of office' mainly, the continuum of conflict does not range over a wide spectrum and it tends to have a narrow range. The nature of factionalism tends to remain unresolved and unregulated; the issues of conflict, power and money, make it appear 'realistic', primarily!

### Recruitment

The basis of the recruitment of personnel in the factions is more 'situational' (i.e., power, gains, status) and less 'structural' (i.e., based on caste, religion, ethnic affinity, etc.). Leaders of factions obviously differ from the members of their groups in point of interest. Leaders are immediately concerned with issues of divergence and their commitment to, and their pursuit of, factional strategy is deeper which distinguishes them from the rank-and-file members. The faction leader tends to have a very high degree of aspirations, past service, political managerial quality, age seniority, a generous and high capacity of patronage distribution.

An ideal type can be constructed on the pattern described by Scala-

pino and Masumi: "The ideal Japanese leader is one possessing seniority, the personality and skill required to bring divergent elements together, and access to funds. He should be a man capable in effecting compromises, achieving a consensus—in these respects a man adept at political tactics and strategy."<sup>6</sup> The art of political manipulation and access to funds are by far the most urgent qualities of a successful faction leader. The ideal faction leader in this case has education, seniority, integrity, sympathetic attitude towards members' problems,<sup>7</sup> political 'tact' and possesses 'reference' (through caste, kin, communal and friendship affiliations) and 'reward' (through the distribution of different kinds of patronage power).

In his discussion of factionalism and the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh, Paul Brass says that under three objective conditions the factional system of Uttar Pradesh has developed: 'the absence of an external threat, the presence of an internal consensus upon ideological issues and the absence of authoritative leadership.'<sup>8</sup> But in many of the Indian States like West Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Haryana, and Kerala where the position of Congress has been undermined greatly and a threat always exists, factions of a more turbulent type have grown in the Congress organisation and government to the extent of forming altogether parallel organisations. The Bangla Congress led by Ajoy Mukherjee in West Bengal, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal of Charan Singh in U.P. and the Lok Tantrik Congress Dal of Binoda Nand Jha and others in Bihar are examples. Thus, factional politics may originate even under the conditions of external threat.

### Lack of Ideology

The absence of ideology as a guiding force of political behaviour facilitates the origin and growth of the faction-situation in Indian

3. See Paul R. Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State. The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh* (1965) p. 236.

4. See Oscar Lewis, 'Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village' (1954), pp. 30-31, and also Yogendra Singh, 'Group Status of Factions in Rural Community', *Journal of Social Science*: 2:1959. pp. 57-58.

\* For discussion see Myron Weiner 'Party Politics in India' *The Development of a Multi-Party System*, p. 238.

\* Oscar Lewis in a 'Comparative Study of the Peasant Culture in India and Mexico' (*American Anthropologist*: 57: 1955 pp. 145-170) finds a similar situation and says that faction is in number and only two as a rule.

5. *The Indian Nation*, Patna 26-10-1964 — A political commentator in 'Who's who and what is what.'

6. Robert A. Scalapino and Junnosuke Masumi, *Parties and Politics in Contemporary Japan* (1962) p. 18.

7. See Paul R. Brass, op. cit. p. 56.

8. *Ibid*, p. 232.

State politics. The great hiatus that exists between the profession and practice of our politicians in general prepares the ground for the full play of factional politics. To quote a political commentator writing on the speech-making habits of our leaders: "The harangued people are confused by both "Ministerialists" and "Dissidents", talking of the same ideals while fighting for loaves and fishes of office. They also feel bewildered by those keen on ushering in a socialistic pattern of society amassing wealth at amazing speed by means fair or foul (mostly foul)."<sup>9</sup>

This point is clearly illustrated if we take into account the political developments at the State level in India. For example, division on any ideological issues has never taken place in the history of the Bihar Congress since 1946 to date. The breaking away of Kisan Savaists (many of whom later formed the Communist group in the State) and Socialists (Jaya Prakash Narayan, Ramnandan Mishra, Ganga Saran Singh and others) marked the end of ideology as a factor in Bihar Congress politics. Politics became more and more personalised and the ruling leadership scrambled more and more for money, power and status.

#### Personal Considerations

Such leadership is easily prone to personalistic group or factional politics. At personal convenience, where there is no cause of anxiety regarding any sacrifice of ideology, a leader changes groups very easily. The Congress in Bihar, and for that matter most of the political parties, is such an amorphous organisation with such a looseness of thought and action that any man can comfortably join this organisation at any moment. We can note here how P.S.P. legislators, Jharkhand legislators, Swatantra legislators and Janata Party legislators were accommodated inside the Congress Party.

The absence of authoritarian leadership may also be one of the factors for the existence of factionalism. As compared to U.P.,

the structure of leadership has been somewhat different in Bihar. Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Vallabh Pant were two very important leaders who had enough authority to contain the factional nature of politics in U.P. if not wholly, at least, partly. In Bihar the situation has been different. Rajendra Prasad was a Bihari but he remained generally out of State politics particularly after independence, and always functioned at the national level. (Jaya Prakash Narayan is another political figure but since 1936 onwards he has been out of the Congress orbit). S. K. Sinha, A. N. Sinha and now B. N. Jha, K. B. Sahay, S. N. Sinha, M. P. Sinha and others never had any mass following.

#### Ineffective Leaders

A complete absence of charisma from their personality has marked them as men of small stature in the society other than what they achieve through the party organisation. For them, politics was and has been a vocation; they did not and do not bring status and prestige to office, but rather sought and seek status and prestige through office.<sup>10</sup>

To understand the level of casteism in State politics one has to know the patterns of conflicts and genesis of factionalism and groupism there. It is not the castes that fight, but personalities in politics whose prestige, power, status and other forms of personal gains which give rise to factions. Instead of strengthening the base of their castes, they, on the contrary, tend to weaken it. Recent trends in Indian politics, crossing floors and changing political parties for example, suggest that factional conflict tends to broaden the bases of participation in the political organisation. Factional politics seem to have integrated new castes and ethnic groups, divided many castes and ethnic and religious groups, and added to their diversity, and their strength.<sup>11</sup>

10. See Paul R. Brass, op. cit, p. 50, for a similar kind of situation in U.P., a neighbouring State.

11. Ibid, p. 241.

9. *The Indian Nation*, op. cit.

# Books

## INDIA AND CEYLON: UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Edited By Philip Mason.

Oxford University Press, London. 1967.

Eleven leading scholars (only two of them Indian) were asked to answer questions about the unity and diversity of India. There is only one essay on Ceylon. The reader is left to guess the precise nature of these questions from the answers given by the contributors. The editor, Philip Mason, however, says that the questions were framed so as to enable the replies to form a coherent whole. The aim was to find out the effects of diversities (seen as divisive forces) on the political stability and unity of India. The five areas of diversity considered are religion, language and region, tribe, caste, and the division between the elites and the masses.

It is evident that diversities become divisive forces only when people become conscious of these and try to manipulate them to further their own interests. The question is: how does this happen? Who opens Pandora's box?

Percival Spear reveals how the Muslims came to regard themselves as a separate community and how this feeling gained political expression in the form of an assertion of separateness in the mid-eighteenth century. Anti-Hindu feelings were provoked in the name of Islamic separation. The Congress came to be identified with Hinduism and the movement finally culminated in the creation of Pakistan. With partition, politics for Muslims as Muslims was 'virtually dead'. Muslims today, writes Spear, have a sense of insecurity in a predominantly Hindu society in which their loyalty to India is often doubted by Hindu extremists. This fear will go with the development of secularism in India. It is through individual advancement, says Spear, rather than through efforts as an organized community, that Muslims in India can hope to build a future for themselves. This is a significant conclusion.

The role of other religions in India is not discussed in the book as these are not considered dangerous to the unity of the country. Mason feels that the Sikhs are contented, having obtained 'their own State'. 'Neither Parsis nor Christians are likely to keep the rulers awake at night' (p. 5). One may not easily

agree with such a view. Reports about anti-national activities of missionaries in tribal areas have caused alarm in many quarters.

Morris-Jones tackles the problem of language and region in a novel way. He is of the view that India faces a continuous political problem of cohesion. Manifestation of this problem in the question of language should neither shock nor cause despair to any one. One cannot reasonably talk of 'dealing' with the problem of language. The very idea suggests a 'removal of a difficulty' which is neither necessary nor possible. The only way out, he says, is to seek ways for 'containing and limiting' the problem and learning to live with it. And India has the political resources to achieve this: she has a 'body of shrewd and seasoned politicians, trained in the States but conditioned, in layers as they move up the party ladder, to think in all-India terms' (p. 66). Their baby is the three language formula which, Morris-Jones feels, is one way of living with the problem. However, the mad fury and violence unleashed by this formula recently only shows that learning to live with the language problem may involve bitter and painful lessons. Others may still like to seek ways to 'deal with the problem'. Morris-Jones relieves us of many of our worries by stating that the federal balance has undergone remarkably little change 'with State-reorganisation and the removal of Nehru from the power-base at the Centre.

In separate essays, M. N. Srinivas, Andre Beteille, and Furer-Haimendorf deal with tribes, untouchables and caste. The problem faced by the tribals is one of integration with the wider society because of their past history of physical and social isolation. The problem of the untouchables is one of breaking through the pollution barrier in order to be accepted as equal members of the society which hitherto had kept them apart. With development in technology and extension of the economic and administrative frontiers, Sanskritization came to play an important role in reducing this sense of isolation and segregation. Srinivas shows how Sanskritization promotes cohesion in the society. The importance of organized politics was soon realized by Harijan and tribal leaders who were impatient with the slow and

not-too-successful method of Sanskritization. They started mobilizing group support on the basis of new secular ideas which had captured their imagination by the stress on the equality of all citizens. The tribals, who were already concentrated in blocks, mobilized group support by asserting their tribal identity. However, their entry into the political arena in order to compete on an equal basis generated conflicts with other contestants who could not reconcile themselves to this defiance of the traditional order.

Beteille assigns a positive role to such conflicts and predicts their multiplication in the future. That physical violence often accompanies these conflicts needs no proof. Part of it may be curbed by the machinery which maintains law and order in the society. The tribal leaders' search for identity is seen by Beteille as 'part of an attempt to come to terms with the political forces' and not so much as 'genuine revival of traditional heritage' (p. 116). He predicts that increasing articulation of the wider social, economic and political system, will destroy many of the bases of tribal identity.

Local politics, according to A. C. Mayer, is mainly the play of coalitions in the formation of which caste is only one factor. A caste's support can be obtained if one is able to 'square' factional cleavages within it. A successful politician, observes Mayer, recruits followers on a variety of bases. He bargains political support for certain advantages which are material in nature. But sometimes people vote for a caste-mate, not in return for some specific advantage, but because of 'caste sentiment'. Mayer discovers that the diversities in the social organization preclude an 'orderly' and predictable coincidence of political and social divisions.

Both Bottomore and Beteille (the latter in his second essay), discuss the gap between the elites and the masses. Beteille shows that bureaucratic and professional elites constitute fairly homogeneous groups from the point of view of recruitment and the internal structure of roles and values. The political elite are relatively more heterogeneous. Both Bottomore and Beteille arrive at similar conclusions: that Indian elites do not display a sharp dichotomy between traditionalists and modernists. The cohesion among them is due to several lines of division cutting across each other. The gap between the elites and masses can be bridged if the base of recruitment of elites widens, and if they shed their consciousness of belonging to an exclusive world. This will enable them to play their modernizing role more effectively.

The diversities discussed in this book are particularistic in their origin and the arguments of the authors point to the fact that Indian society is still a web of particularistic ties. The modern political scene is characterized by assertions of all types of particularistic identities, which, under the value-loaded term 'communalism' have made many people, including foreigners, speculate about the future of India. They fear that the growth of

'communalism' will deal a fatal blow to the unity of India.

One of the merits of this book is that it shows the positive side of 'communalism' to the prophets of gloom, by indicating that a certain amount of 'communalism' is inevitable in a democracy and planned economy. A person's loyalties to his caste, religion or region, need not necessarily prevent him from being loyal to his country. One may observe a simultaneous operation of two processes: on the one hand, political leaders try to compete for power by mobilizing people's particularistic ties, thereby giving rise to 'communalism'. On the other hand, economic, social and other changes in the society weaken particularistic loyalties by creating new networks of interpersonal relations which cut across these ties. Sooner or later, attempts to mobilize support on particularistic bases will become ineffective and, therefore, meaningless. But these loyalties are likely to remain even if they are devoid of political importance.

Mayer states that political activity presupposes divisions, and these divisions may run along any lines, be they caste or regional. The more relevant question, he says, is: 'Is it preferable to have divisions on a caste basis or on some other basis?' (p. 140) The essays in this book indicate that if at all it is a matter of preference, the timing of the choice/choices is determined by the particular sequence of events. But politics in India is the politics of scarcity and everything else, including the nature and particular sequence of events, follows from this basic fact. The scope for making choices is, therefore, limited.

In his introductory review, Mason claims that the group view, is in general optimistic. He bases his own optimism on his observation that Indian society is bound into a stable whole by a 'tough net-work of fibres' which will keep her so in the future. The Congress Party is the 'driving engine' of the political machinery for linking society and the State. The Congress Party 'mirrors the paradoxes and complexities' of Indian society and is, like Hinduism, a loose confederation of many groups and interests. Therein lies its source of strength.

The general view apart, the essays in this book contain valuable information and provide insights into a number of other important problems which are too many to be listed here.

Aneeta Ahluwalia

**THE POLITICS OF MODERNIZATION** By David E. Apter.

Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1965

Modernization can be defined as a transformation from the old to the new, a break-up of old traditions by recent innovations. According to western political philosophy, such a modernization makes provision for more choices, with an improvement in the conditions and mechanisms of choice. Depending on the pace of this change,

modernization would be called a revolutionary process. Such a modernization in the social sphere, has its own immediate impact on the political life, as the democratic-capitalistic politics finds itself acting within this increasingly complex and highly competitive state of human affairs.

As contrasted with this philosophical approach of the west, Marxism would interpret modernization in a functional sense; it is a revolutionary break with the past, leading to materialistic alterations in a vertical rather than horizontal level. From a stage of competition and scarcity, it seeks to reach a world of abundance and more kindliness. Marxism tests modernization not by more freedom to choose or avenues of change, but by the net result in concrete materialistic terms in creating an egalitarian society.

Broadly speaking, Marxism and western capitalism provide two alternative concepts of modernization for the economically underdeveloped and politically and sociologically yet to be 'modernised' nations of Asia and Africa. This interpretation of modernization would be called a traditional view of the concept of modernization—one which identifies modernization with westernisation and believes that all the ancient societies of the east are either in need of modernization or in the process of being modernised, with the Soviet Union and the United States as two giant models.

David Apter's book adopts this traditional approach and arrives at the expected conclusion that a political democracy with representative institutions is the culmination and ultimate touch-stone of this modernising process. Apter's work which is in the nature of a politico-sociological text book on the process of modernization, studies the various factors which contribute to a peaceful modernization in the social, economic and political structure. Among the factors which contribute to such a process, Apter mentions colonialism as leading to a contact with the west, the politicalisation of intellectuals as the bearers of the culture of modernity and the formation of political parties and other political groups as instruments of modernization to be manipulated by political entrepreneurs.

Apter, however, realises that these factors which are essentially western in origin and growth, may not automatically lead to a modernization as western thinkers understand it, but might evolve other variables during the modernization period leading to entirely different political values. Most of the new nations, during this period, have witnessed the evolution of a mobilisation system by an authoritarian government based on party solidarity under charismatic personalities, rule by military elites and a powerful bureaucracy. In this stage if the modernising process is not supported by a strong economic and social infra-structure, this might lead to political crises and popular uprisings. On the other hand, if a late modernization is combined with early industrialisation, Apter believes, the same mobilisation might lead to massive economic development. The

mobilisation system itself will gradually decline due to a greater need for information leading to a greater decentralisation.

This traditional view of modernization has been widely criticised. Many western philosophers, Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith being one of them, believe that modernization is a process which all countries, east or west, are undergoing. In the course of the three lectures which he delivered at New Delhi in 1964 under the auspices of the Indian Council of World Affairs, Smith had demolished many of the traditional premises of modernization.\* He argues that modernity does not necessarily mean 'desirability'.

In many cases, like the manufacture of nuclear arms or the industrialisation of urban areas leading to 'industrial slums', modernization has not been desirable. In some cases it might even be dangerous. The well-known philosopher also doubts whether any society including the developed western ones, is fully modern. To the extent that both India and the United States are striving to be more modern, there is no essential difference between a western and eastern society. Simply to imitate the western model or to become 'westernised' would not make any Asian or African country modernised. To Smith, modernization would not mean to live in one particular environment rather than another. It means to live in the environment which one's society has deliberately chosen to construct, and to do so rationally and self-consciously.

Professor Smith also points out the irony of the situation in which many in the non-communist west have come to arrive at a definition of modernization which essentially smacks of Marxism. It is that modernization is a process by which the economic and technological aspects of national life can be transformed by purely economic and technological measures, independent of the rest of life. (Incidentally, Dr. Apter too had reached a conclusion which related political processes to the economic structure).

On the other hand, Smith emphasises the primacy of ideas over matter, of ideology over economic progress. In his view, the Soviet Union is the only country which has sufficiently understood this role of intellectuals. According to him, modernization is a total process and one which involves a transformation not only in economic but even in the moral and religious spheres. It should be sought to be achieved within one's own social framework rather than by an imitation of the 'west' in one way or the other. Referring specifically to India, he believes that a combination of Gandhi's ideas and Nehru's approach represented this total process in India.

Hence, modernization is a process which each country needs to pass through, in the sense of keeping up its progress and moving ahead. However, its goals should be imaginative and suited to the peculiar

\*See W. C. Smith, *Modernization of a Traditional Society*, Bombay, 1965

genius of its own people. It is a process which has to be qualified by and conditioned to the political atmosphere, historical traditions and economic factors of each country. It is a 'socio-political economic movement and not just a blind imitation of the west.

Susheela Kaushik

**SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN INDIA** By M. N. Srinivas.  
Allied Publishers. 1966.

Commenting upon the impact of the contact between Asia and the West, I. R. Sinai, in his book *The Challenge of Modernisation* has written: 'The western impact on these societies was fundamentally a superficial one...operated on the surface of Asian life and did not affect its ponderous subterranean foundations'. Professor M. N. Srinivas in his book, *Social Change in Modern India*, has argued that the British rule in India has brought about sweeping changes in our traditional culture and social structure.

According to him, there are two 'contrapuntal' processes, 'Sanskritization' and 'Westernization', underlying the social change in modern India. The former denotes the tendency of the castes occupying a lower position in the social hierarchy of imitating the way of life of the Brahmins, who stood at the apex of the social pyramid because of the all pervasive influence that religion (Hinduism) exercised upon the social structure comprising mainly three institutions; the caste system, the village community and the family system.

On the basis of the evidence drawn from Mysore, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh, Professor Srinivas asserts that Sanskritization provided the core of social change in India, from times immemorial, implying the possibility of vertical mobility in the hierarchy of castes. In other words, low caste Hindus and tribals, without changing the overall structure of the society, could change their position: of course, it happened rarely as it invited the wrath of the dominant caste. This simply means that Indian society in spite of the fact that it always had its foundations in Hinduism was not completely devoid of change and as such was not altogether free from conflict, overt as well as covert.

Much more interesting is his contention that the process was furthered by the forces which were introduced by British rule in the stream of national life and by the legislative measures undertaken by the Government of India in the post-independence era. Professor Srinivas differs from many other educated Indians, at least so far as the 'performance of British rule does not appear to him discreditable in the least. Rapid development of the means of transport and communication, spread of western education, introduction of social, economic and judicial reforms and the use of scientific technique on an extensive

scale not only facilitated the 'political and administrative integration' of this vast country, but also supplemented the earlier spirit of tolerance underlying Hinduism by inculcating new values of equality and liberty.

In his chapter on westernization, Srinivas rejects the term modernization for such changes on the ground that 'social goals in the final analysis are the expression of certain value preferences' which implies non-rationalization whereas modernization necessarily involves rationalization of ends. The term westernization is more inclusive as it covers not only the introduction of new institutions but also changes in the existing institutions.

The keynote of westernization is humanitarianism which, in theory at least, has two prerequisites; namely, growth of equalitarian tendencies and secularisation of various aspects of culture and society. Secularisation of Indian society is one of the many gifts of British rule, during which 'the concepts of pollution and purity' which are central as well as pervasive in Hinduism have been weakened as a result of the new interpretation given to Hinduism by the emerging middle class. In the post-independence period, this 'New Elite' has helped a great deal in broadening as well as deepening the values of secularism and freeing the social structure from the hold of religion.

There is hardly any necessity of mentioning that his observations pertaining to the growth of humanitarianism and secularism are widely off the mark in the context of the contemporary Indian scene characterized by frequent outbursts of communal violence, inhuman and irrational in content as well as spirit. But in his book, Srinivas has touched upon the phenomenon of 'politicalization' which perhaps provides the most cogent explanation of the recent developments.

India is no different to other developing countries of Asia and Africa in having a strong motive force of nationalism imparting respectability to its aspirations and making it imperative for the leaders to undertake the rapid transformation of traditional culture and quick economic development on socialistic lines. Inherent in this is the conflict between the old and the new order. The sharpness of the conflict can be perceived if it is kept in mind that the leadership has quite often drawn its strength from the past in the course of awakening national consciousness. Not to talk of Gandhi, even Nehru was no exception to this (his oft-quoted soliloquy in which he confessed that neither did he belong to the East nor to the West is a case in point).

This 'cultural schizophrenia' when it operates in a democratic polity characterized by plurality, leads to the growth of 'particularistic loyalties'. To quote the author himself, 'Westernization has given birth to forces which are mutually at cross-purposes...In the political and cultural field, westernization has

given birth not only to nationalism but also to revivalism, communalism, "casteism", heightened linguistic consciousness and regionalism'.

In the light of the above, social change in modern India in the second half of the twentieth century can be viewed as one in which religion has released the social structure from its hold and has assumed a political form, the concrete expression of which can be seen in the appeal of the political parties like the Jana Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha and the so-called cultural organizations like the RSS.

By any dictates of reason, this change does not deserve the label of westernization or secularisation. Thus it would not be entirely incorrect to say that Srinivas's hasty and ill-conceived generalizations, like those of all others, are far from reality. Still his original concept of Sanskritization remains valid and the changes which have taken place during the last 150 years remain irrefuted. Apart from this the specific information regarding various caste groups in both ancient and modern society is of immense help in understanding social changes in certain regions.

V. K. Gupta

#### PARTY SYSTEM AND ELECTION STUDIES

Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (Occasional Paper: Number 1),  
Allied Publishers, 1967.

This compilation of papers, brought out by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, is intended to be the first in a series of occasional papers. It would, perhaps, be impertinent to pass judgement on the usefulness of the Centre's work. One has only to wait and see what follows the publication under review.

Judged from this point of view, *Party System and Election Studies* has done a good job. In the 'Congress System in India', Rajni Kothari says: 'The Indian experience with political parties . . . is one of the most successful party systems in operation and yet is a system that cuts across the usual stereotypes, and also calls into question the very criterion of political performance usually employed in the analysis of party systems'.

The party system in India, according to Rajni Kothari is distinct from the 'Western' model in that there is no 'choice between alternatives'. The Congress is a 'party of consensus' and the Opposition 'parties of pressure' functioning 'on the margin and, indeed, the concept of a *margin of pressure* is of great importance in this system'. The necessary parts of this 'one party dominance system' are the 'idea of an in-built corrective through factionalism within the ruling party, and the idea of a latent threat from outside the margin of pressure'.

This, in brief, is the conceptual-theoretical framework of one party dominance set by Rajni Kothari.

In the next crucial paper on 'Developments and Trends', Gopal Krishna takes the 'conceptualisation' a bit further. Substance to it is provided largely on the basis of electoral, demographic, economic and party finance data. The competitive factional character of the Congress is dealt with by Ramashray Roy's paper on inner party mobility in Bihar which is sought to be projected in terms of 'political fragmentation based on caste and other loyalties'. In the next seven papers, one-party dominance and caste-politics interaction are discussed in case studies of Baroda East, Madasa constituency and the Congress defeat in Andhra and Farrukhabad.

But the book under review has limitations occasioned by the fact that it was published last year, and presumably was in the press much before the 1967 General Elections. This limitation need not have been focussed upon by this reviewer but for the attempts made by Rajni Kothari and Gopal Krishna to draw upon the past experience for making certain projections. And, these projections have been proved short-sighted even by the February 1967 election results and the experience with non-Congress governments.

It must be said to the credit of Rajni Kothari that he anticipated the possibility of change in the political system. But, then, both Rajni Kothari and Gopal Krishna are subject to certain self-imposed constraints. Perhaps, Gopal Krishna's observation that 'Congress shall stay and must stay' is a by-product of these constraints.

For Rajni Kothari, it is an open question whether 'the new party or coalition provides us with another party consensus or is just an expression of accumulated protest on the part of the public likely to wither away after a short time in office'. The underlying idea in the first possibility is that a party or a group of parties at the Centre can rule with consensus alone—a view also projected by Gopal Krishna who finds consensus emerging as an instrument of power even within the Congress.

It needs to be stressed at this juncture that non-Congress governments came into existence in nine States after the last general elections not only because the masses were fed up with the Congress but also because of the success of the united fronts in eliminating the splitting up of votes—though, Gopal Krishna would not agree with the statement that 'Congress wins seats because the Opposition to it is divided'. What, then, explains the rout of Congress in the last elections? The non-Congress parties, despite the mutual bickerings and clash of ideologies and personalities inside the organisation, certainly did not wrest a majority from the Congress because of increase in the party finances which largely remained in the hands of the Congress due to the privilege it enjoyed at the Centre and in the States.

Gopal Krishna seems to carry his wish for status quo too far in asserting that the Congress Party



commands 'stable support at a level close to half the poll'. True, this assertion is based on the data available for the last three elections. But what justifies his firm belief that the stability of the Indian polity will require the *continued dominance of the Congress party in the foreseeable future*?' (italics reviewers').

Is it the belief that the political awakening among the youth, the rural population and the industrial workers is a myth? Gopal Krishna admits that 'spread of education and the media of communication, population growth and increasing urbanisation, economic development, greater mobility, and insufficient employment opportunities' would introduce a 'measure of change' among the 'politically relevant strata'. What needs to be added, however, is that the peasant and the worker today is certainly more politically conscious. Despite the continued advice to the students to stay away from politics, they have refused to take things lying down. The events in Europe are now bound to give a new direction to the student movement in the country. These anticipations do not make the measure of change 'unpredictable'.

Experience with non-Congress governments shows that if there really existed a 'democratic spirit' in the Congress, these coalitions would have lasted. But the success of the Congress at the Centre lies in dislodging the non-Congress governments with the immense powers in its hand. And, despite being 'loosely constructed coalitions' they attempted to evolve a 'purposeful, coherent, well-directed efforts to harness the resources of the State and society'. It takes time to resolve the contradiction to which Gopal Krishna refers. This 'contradiction' is no doubt the legacy of the party system in India derived from the national independence movement. It is because of this that the opposition before the last elections was a group of 'parties of pressure'.

But the swing that has taken place against the one-party dominance, despite the 'backlash' within a year of the last elections, is bound to lead to a 'major change' which necessarily has to be preceded by a period of uncertainty and a certain amount of instability. In fact, a process of giving a positive direction to anti-Congressism is being initiated. Perhaps, in the forthcoming series the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies would entrust its able analysts with the task of studying changes in the Indian polity, introduced by the last elections. This is not too much to expect from the Centre provided its luminaries overthrow the self-imposed limitations and act as unbiased political analysts.

Ramesh Jaura

**SOCIOLOGY OF POLITICS** By R. Bhaskaran.  
Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1967.

Lately, intellectuals in the west have expressed their concern over the pure sciences being run down

by the applied ones. The authors of this concern are not always the scientists and they have occasionally shown their anxiety at the deterioration of the contents in art and literature too. These intellectual infiltrators into the fields of science and the humanities seem to have assumed the position of comprehensive Aristotles. While they hold that the pure sciences are giving way to the applied sciences, it can also be contended with a fair amount of certainty that all other disciplines are being made to host a specific one called sociology. And, undoubtedly, it has proved its worth. Professor R. Bhaskaran's *Sociology of Politics* is evidently the culmination of his desire to host a sociologist in the field of political science.

In spite of Professor Bhaskaran's obvious homesickness for the conservation and promotion of pure political science, the deviation therefrom is fruitful and thought provoking.

Before we probe the contents of the book, it is necessary to note that we are still feeding on a sort of imported or adopted sociology and we have yet to develop an indigenous one. In fact this discipline grows out of a thoroughly developed tradition of a history of philosophy—which we came to know of very recently. This phenomenon has always handicapped a systematic probe into the sociology of our society. We depend for all types of historical data on what has been printed by a particular British press and which are quite inadequate and pervert our judgments.

Take for instance the two problems of caste and language dealt with at length by Professor Bhaskaran. The author, in concurrence with Kroeber and most of the other western and the westernised scholars, holds that caste is a horizontal division of the Hindu society. According to this theory the caste system in India is supposed to have originated from the so-called Vedic society. But we never had any single society at any time so categorically divided into the four major castes of the Brahmin, the Kshatriya and so on, performing four different social functions. The facts prove beyond doubt that these so-called major castes were separately constituted having independent socio-cultural entities which were later confused into each other due to political deterioration.

This gives altogether a different colour to the problem of caste in India. Professor Bhaskaran's contention is correct where he says that the extreme immobility of our population has conserved the caste system here; but a careful review of history would reveal far more startling facts, namely, that the education system of the Brahmins imposed upon this society has produced a parasitic culture which refuses to be independent of extra-territorial



# Communications

It is highly regrettable that Ranjit Gupta has in posing the problem of *Minority in Crisis* betrayed an unconcealed bias against the numerically most important minority in India, viz., the Muslims. What starts as an apparently objective analysis of the situation takes a clever turn in paragraph six where Gupta approvingly quotes S. Abid Husain to bring out what both of them regard as 're-emergence of Muslim communalism'. The veneer of objectivity is kept up in the next paragraph where factors helping the movement of (Muslim) religious communalism are listed. But with the beginning of paragraph ten, all pretence to objectivity is thrown to the winds. Here Hindu secularists are accused of having an aggressive approach and the Gandhians are held guilty of appeasement. Both are further charged with (unwanted) zeal holding them responsible for 'hurting the feelings of the very people whom they wish to reform or restrain'. The bulk of the remaining article is filled with a puerile comparison of Hindu-Muslim attitudes towards each other.

One should have expected Gupta to underline the preponderate Hindu respon-

sibility for the physical and emotional alienation of the Muslims in India. For many centuries they have been treated by the Hindus as worse than outcastes and have been completely ostracized. In many Hindu homes animals could have a deeper access than Muslims. Gupta has shown an utter lack of historical perspective by ignoring this vital aspect of the situation.

Even more amazing than the absence of historical perspective is the lack of any reference to two important facts. (a) The refusal of caste Hindus to assimilate the Muslims within the vortex of social and civic life: who does not know that it is almost impossible for any Muslim to rent a house in a Hindu locality. All this has only one inevitable result: the segregation of the Muslims from the mainstream of social life and their concentration in select areas of towns where they are forced to lead an isolationist life. (b) The presence of a Fascist organisation like the R.S.S. which has the avowed aim of complete physical extirpation of Muslims as a separate cultural and political entity: this organisation exploits every opportunity to terrorize the

Muslims and is perhaps the single biggest factor responsible for creating a sense of insecurity among them. It is surprising how Ranjit Gupta did not even as much as mention the R.S.S. in his article.

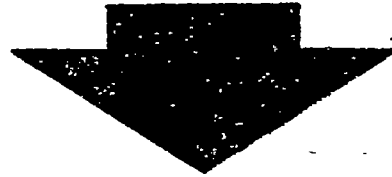
Yet another important factor which has been all but missed by Gupta is the systematic and calculated way in which Hindu communalism has succeeded in murdering one of the richest treasures of Indian culture, wrongly and mischievously identified with Muslims and Islam, the Urdu language. The neglect of Urdu is harmful to India as a whole, but the Indian Muslims have understandably taken it as a wilful onslaught on their legitimate cultural interests.

Positive suggestions for solving the crisis in which the minorities find themselves in India could have usefully been included by Gupta in his article. (Incidentally, he has confined himself to only one minority community, viz., the Muslims, and this has robbed his article of some important dimensions of the problem involved). One could, for example, expect the leading article on the subject to contain some mention of the need for a common civil code for India in the interests of social cohesion. Similarly, a good case could be made out for imparting a truly secular education and for re-writing Indian history particularly that of the Muslim period with a view to ensuring that no communal acrimony and narrow religious bigotry resulted from the reading of it. Another important question worth examining would have been: how far is it proper to concede certain special rights to other minorities like the Anglo-Indians while denying the same to the Muslims?

Much has been made in this article by Gupta of the 'family and religious ties' which most Indian Muslims have with their kith and kin in Pakistan. The untold implication is inevitable: the loyalty of Indian Muslims is suspect. Curiously, Gupta has completely ignored the role and behaviour of Indian Muslims during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan conflict. Is it too much to suspect that Gupta has wilfully avoided these central issues and suppressed inconvenient facts? The net result of all this is that the problem has been wrongly posed, even distorted by the poser.

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WE ARE MOST ANXIOUS THAT  
READERS GIVE US  
THEIR VIEWS  
ON THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE  
DISCUSSED ON THESE PAGES FROM  
MONTH TO MONTH  
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE EDITOR  
SHOULD BECOME A REGULAR FEATURE  
IF  
YOU  
JOIN THE DEBATE IN

**seminar**

aid. This parasitism has blocked the way for social change.

As the author has occasionally observed, the people's participation in the contemporary social process is painfully insignificant. We find self-contradiction and inconsistencies in our efforts for socio-cultural transfiguration. But the author's conclusions are somewhat sketchy and vague if not hurried. The vagueness has reduced the positivism of an analytical sociology to radical observation. He is impressive while arguing out a case against Hindi but he fails to suggest any suitable alternative to the already propagated formula responsible for linguistic chaos and confusion.

As a social philosopher, the author's scope and insight have been dimmed by what I can call the commercialization of scholastics. Quite a large number of articles included in the book were originally written for the consumption of newspapers and the radio where one has to dilute the contents for the masses. Topics concerning the author's own discipline, such as 'freedom in the twentieth century' and 'approaches to the study of politics in India', are notable exceptions.

Professor Bhaskaran is a scholar with a difference, of course; he is not a cynic and he is not a comprehensive theoretician. He is someone you are not in agreement or disagreement with because he seldom philosophises.

Mudra Rakshasa

**DIVISIVENESS AND SOCIAL CONFLICT** By Alan R. Beals and Bernard J. Siegel.  
Oxford University Press, 1967.

The primary theme of the book is 'divisiveness' or 'divisive conflict'—terms used in this work to describe certain types of conflicts which are regarded as detrimental to an organisation and, hence, requiring some remedial action. The claim of the authors is extremely modest: no attempt has been made to establish a systematic theory of conflict or even of divisiveness. Nor have they suggested a novel concept of culture. Although some fresh definitions have been offered and developed, due recognition has been paid to previous conflict research in anthropology, sociology and psychology.

It is based on extensive field work in the south Indian community of Namhalli and the Pueblo American Indian Community of Taos. On the basis of a common language, common experience, continued resolution of social problems unique to these areas and commitment to aspects of behaviour that make permanent residence in other communities difficult for most of the residents the authors conclude that both Namhalli and Taos represent 'bounded patches of territory and time'.

The authors have distinguished a number of types of conflicts, including pseudo conflict, divisive conflict, normal dispute and factional dispute. In

classifying conflicts into types, the attention of the authors has drifted towards those points whose increases in scale or 'the degree of threatened disruption', scope, or 'the size of the social unit involved', and pervasiveness or 'the number of kinds of relationship disrupted along a scale ranging from total individualistic conflict to schism' are expected to produce differences in behaviour. This present work is limited to a discussion of the factionalist conflict of Taos and Namhalli. In other words, the authors have confined their study to the analysis of the stable or structural characteristics of both the communities having direct bearing on factionalist disputes, and to the discussion of certain patterns of stress or change in the surroundings which encourage the development of factionalist dispute. Finally, an attempt has been made to arrive at theoretical understanding.

One of the principal findings of the present authors is that most of the identifiable strains in both the communities can be united together and related to the major ideological principles. For example, at Namhalli, the contrast between the principles of hierarchy and equality has given rise to the notion of separate moral and practical obligations attached to each social relationship, demanding strong authority to legislate and to enforce specific obligations so that a weakening of any single hierarchic relationship leads to a general weakening of all hierarchic relationships.

Taos and Namhalli differ in the way groups are formed—in the way conflicts originate and are arbitrated and in the frequently and disruptive effects of conflicts. At the same time, there are many similarities between the two communities. It is interesting to note that opposing groups tend to champion the cause of the whole community and adopt self-righteous postures. Another attribute of factionalism is the tendency for disputes to come to a head over seemingly trivial incidents. The goal is always, or in most general cases, to 'bring down' the opposing side. Defeat or victory on any particular issue is far more important than the issue itself. Even an ordinary quarrel between husband and wife or quarrels between brothers come to involve more and more people. It seems quite reasonable to offer a proposition that faction leaders attempt to claim the support of existing organisations and viewpoints even though the organisations are divided and the viewpoints are not uniformly held.

True, the present work is interesting in so far as it attempts to apply accumulated wisdom on conflicts to a study of tensions in two distinct communities. The reviewer, however, is not certain about the contribution of this work to our knowledge regarding social conflicts. It claims to follow an anthropological approach. But, by and large, it remains a structural analysis of tensions in two communities, based on superficial similarities and couched almost in incomprehensible jargon.

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## AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

a symposium on the  
various aspects of the  
new strategy

symposium participants

### THE PROBLEM

A note putting the present  
situation in perspective

### THE NEW APPROACH

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# The problem

THE country is in the throes of an agricultural revolution. A dramatic leap forward has followed the successful evolution of the high-yielding strains of rice, wheat, jowar, bajra, maize, groundnut, linseed, rapeseed, mustard, lucerne etc. These for the first time make it possible for the grower to increase his yields not by a mere 15 to 20 per cent but by 70 to 80 per cent or more. The basic aim is to bring one-eleventh of the cultivated area, or 32.5 million acres in selected districts with assured sources of irrigation, under the new varieties to produce an additional 25.5 million tons by 1972 and thus increase the total production of foodgrains to 120 million tons. This in outline is the 'new strategy for agriculture'.

The reasons for its restricted application are not far to seek. If a plant is to produce more it has to be fed more. This calls for heavier doses of fertilizer. But fertilization calls for more water. Hence the selection of districts with assured sources of irrigation. If the target area falls short of the total irrigated area, this

is only because of the shortage of other inputs required to produce high yields.

Those who are inclined to accept official projections for 1972 are not living in a fool's paradise. There are sound reasons for their optimism. The implementation of the new strategy is fast approaching the half-way mark. Over 15 million acres will have been sown with the new varieties by July this year. The programme has set in motion a self-generating dynamism. The striking addition which the use of the new varieties can make to the growers' net income is a powerful motivator. It virtually compels him to exert pressures to ensure that the required inputs are made available. As a result, there is now hardly a politician who can face his rural constituents without promising to do what he can to lay on additional supplies.

The existence of these pressures is substantial reason for believing that New Delhi will make a determined effort to satisfy the material requirements of the programme. It is aware that a shortfall of say 100,000 tons of fertilizers will not only reduce the potential production of foodgrains by 1.5 million tons but will also

alienate a highly influential and increasingly well organised class whose interests are directly involved.

Every effort is being made to plug the loopholes. The outlook for fertilizers is a good deal more optimistic than it was a year ago. The new strategy areas will finally require 1.3 million tons in terms of fixed nitrogen. If all goes well, 1.9 million tons will be produced by 1971. The search for additional sources of credit for the cultivator is being kept up. The seed production programme is at last receiving the attention it deserves.

The problems of 'relative over-production' in the short run are also being taken in hand. The term 'over-production' is used advisedly to connote a level of production which is in excess not of India's requirements but of the handling capacity of its purchase, storage, transportation and distribution agencies. Several States have already initiated ambitious schemes. In Punjab, for instance, a crash programme is under way to bring every single village within two miles of an all-weather link. Popular demand can be relied upon to exert pressures leading to similar developments elsewhere, too, as and when the need is felt.

All this augurs well. But the problems of a developing agriculture are not limited to ensuring adequate supplies of tangible inputs and services for which there is an immediate and effective demand. There remains a sizable list of other 'intangible' problems. Some of these are unlikely to make themselves felt for several years to come, but it is clear that the planning required to come to grips with them must be undertaken now if the answers are to be available when they are most required.

It is essential to be alert to the continuing importance of scientific research if a valuable programme is not to be needlessly impaired. There has so far been an almost exclusive emphasis on plant breeding and genetics, leaving significant gaps in other fields. The breakthrough which has so far been achieved can lead to as many problems as it has solved. The 'high plant populations' which are the key to the high yields of the new varieties open devastating opportunities for plant disease micro-organisms, which are likely to be further enhanced by the continued but unavoidable intensive application of nitrogenous fertilizers.

More important still is the fact that the development and widespread use of the new varieties brings with it a new order of demands on the nation's agricultural soils, some already exhausted by age-old unscientific cropping, leading to severe mineral deficiencies which can under no circumstances be remedied by chemical fertilizers. The soil is like a bank account.

There is a limit to its depletion. The problem of maintaining its structure and its ability to produce heavy yields will call for wide-ranging research dealing with the use of plant hormones and micronutrients, soil and crop chemistry, soil engineering and the agronomy of soil-crop relations. These are obviously potential problems which call for action now and not later. But, by some perverse logic, the States have reacted to the challenge this year only by cutting down the budgets of research programmes in general and of the agricultural universities in particular.

It would be shortsighted not to look beyond the horizons of the high-yielding varieties programme with its limited target of 120 million tons of foodgrains. A substantial result from attempts at controlling population growth is still unforeseeable for at least another 15 years. Accordingly, the nation's agricultural programmes must be geared to sustain a constant and steady rate of growth well beyond 120 million tons. Making allowances for a 20 per cent variation in yields as a result of adverse conditions, the foundations must be laid for an output of 150 million tons to meet the needs of an estimated 630 to 650 million people in the latter half of the 1970s.

To return to more immediate problems, the stage has now been reached at which planning for agricultural growth needs to be based on a new methodology. What has so far been established is a network which deals exclusively with the technical problems of development. With varying degrees of efficiency, the extension organisations feed research centres with problems observed in the field and attempt bringing back the scientists' answers to the farmer. This leaves untouched the vital task of gathering information regarding items such as the saving-consumption patterns of progressive farmers, the manner in which the price mechanism affects their investment decisions and output projections, the proportion of marketable surplus in relation to total output, the timing of sales, shifts in expenditure and consumption in response to the stimuli provided by a rapidly changing social and economic environment, etc.

The lack of a systematic and institutionalised network for the feed-back and analysis of such data invariably handicaps the long-term planning, not just of agriculture but of industry as well. Whatever assessments are made at present are based largely on guesswork. This can result in entirely unnecessary delays and dislocations.

There has been a marked shift in recent years in the terms of trade between industry and agriculture, in favour of the latter. The trend is likely to be further accentuated in the next few years as agricultural production continues

to increase. With substantial surplus incomes in rural areas it is obvious that a greater measure of industrial investment will have to be geared to the rural market. But as yet there is virtually no system for making accurate estimates either of its taxable potential or its pattern of demand. This is a gap that must be remedied.

The new high-yielding varieties are not miracle seeds which merely require to be sown in order to produce higher yields. A great deal more is involved. It is not just the research worker who will be required to come up with the right answers to problems connected with the use of micro-nutrients, moisture conservation techniques, scientific cropping patterns and constantly changing plant protection schedules to suit variations in the physiological characteristics of insects, pests and diseases. The answers to these problems require to be carried to the cultivators as well.

This in turn throws a vastly increased responsibility on the extension services, which will have to be both more numerous and more sophisticated. In other words, a dynamic agriculture calls for a greater willingness to invest not only in material inputs but in human beings too. But of the latter there is still no sign anywhere. It is fanciful to expect the status quo to be maintained. The pay scales of agricultural inspectors were fixed 50 years ago at Rs. 130 per month. An upward revision is certainly called for.

In addition, the fact that the extension education worker will be required to face new problems each year indicates the need for a system which will provide him with steady in-service training. This is possible only if his services are controlled by major regional centres of research, to which he can return from time to time. In other words, extension education can be established on a sound basis only if it is made the exclusive responsibility of the new agricultural universities. This is a need that some States have recognised. But the majority have not.

Can the funds be found? Dr. Borlaug, the renowned wheat breeder who visited India earlier this year, brought with him an exhilarating story of the dynamism unleashed among farmers in Mexico by the new dwarf strains. Three quarters of the annual budget of Mexico's wheat research station at Sonora now consists of subscriptions voluntarily raised by the farmers themselves.

Yet, things were very different not so long ago, says Dr. Borlaug. Mexican farmers, like their counterparts anywhere, looked upon agricultural scientists with amused contempt. Research had little to offer and growers insisted

that their own seeds were better. The jolt came in 1959 with the new dwarf wheat which held forth a hitherto unimaginable increase in yields. Research has since become a sacred word.

There are signs that a similar awakening is taking place in India too. Panchayat Samitis in Ludhiana voluntarily foot the bills of the Punjab Agricultural University's farm bulletins. Last year there were several bus-loads of farmers who wanted to garland Dr. D. S. Athwal with rupee-notes for his outstanding contribution to the development of Kalyan 227 and hybrid bajra. The willingness to help research workers already exists. It now needs to be organised.

There remains the problem of malnutrition. Cereals and pulses alone do not make a balanced diet. Given a reasonable monsoon, the next year should see the production of foodgrains rise to 110 million tons—or self-sufficiency plus a small exportable surplus. But the nation will still be hopelessly undernourished. There is a crippling deficiency in the intake of protein, iron and Vitamin A. This is cause for serious concern. Its victims include a majority of the children in the pre-school age, or about 20 per cent of the population.

It has been established beyond reasonable doubt that there is a definite relationship between malnutrition and mental retardation. The implications are clear. An undernourished child is forever debarred from growing up to be bright and productive.

Against a recommended diet of 16 ounces of cereals and 34 ounces of non-cereal food per day, the average Indian's per capita intake is still restricted to roughly 15 ounces and 16 ounces respectively. The principal non-cereal source of proteins is milk. With an average daily output of 65 million kilograms its consumption amounts to no more than five ounces per capita per day. If the 10 ounces recommended for a balanced diet are to be made available, output will have to be doubled to 130 million kilograms a day.

Scientists working at dairy research institutions are more optimistic today than they have ever been. A new strategy for milk production is now in sight. This will do for dairying what the new high-yielding strains have done for the production of foodgrains. Over half a dozen research institutions are now in a position to develop sizable cross-bred herds with an average yield per animal of between eight to 10 kilograms per day, which is over nine times the national average. But how long will it take before this technical breakthrough can be expected to make a substantial impact on actual production?

# The new approach

S. S. JOHL

THE intensive agricultural development approach is sufficiently recognised in India; it needs no emphasis on its merits and usefulness. It is a different matter, how-

ever, that in its implementation we faltered at many points and, may be, the approach did not proceed in the desired direction and at a desired pace and also that under

the changed circumstances the approach needs to be broad-based and re-oriented to transcend and expand beyond the area boundaries of a few selected districts in the country. When the Intensive Agricultural District Programme was launched in the year 1961, the situation was beset with an all round deficiency of food and raw materials. The major concern, therefore, was to increase the total production in the country with this selective approach.

To harness fully the areas with the highest production potentials, a few districts where the marginal physical product was expected to be the highest for the limited farm resources were selected, so that an all out effort, intensively and extensively, could be made in these areas to exploit fully the potentials of the new production technology. Although the original concept of production planning was almost lost in the process of implementation of this programme, the intensive efforts made in these districts produced very encouraging results. By this time, the programme, after passing through various phases, has developed a good deal on some aspects like supplies, credit, etc.

During this period of seven to eight years, agricultural production technology also experienced a major change, no less than a complete revolution. The impact of these new developments in terms of technological advancement has been felt throughout the country. Naturally enough, a greater proportion of these benefits have gone to these selected districts, as they were more and better prepared to receive and adopt the new practices. These districts, therefore, are now at a distinctly different stage of development compared to the other areas of the country.

#### **Future of IADP**

Now that the agricultural production technology has been revolutionized through the introduction of high yielding varieties of crops

like wheat, maize, rice and bajra and through the supply of larger quantities and varied types of other inputs such as fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, etc., a valid question arises on the future role of the Intensive Agricultural District Programmes in the development of the agricultural economy.

No doubt these selected areas received a larger share in the initial benefits, yet a wave of awakening has been created throughout the country and even the common-run cultivators have become aware of the need to effect changes in the methods of production. Unbelievably high seed prices resulting in development of blackmarkets and exploitation of the over-enthusiastic farmers in the supply of new seeds by some unscrupulous persons, and pressures for making available the supplies of fertilizers and power connections for tubewells and pumping sets, long queues for the purchase of tractors and other improved implements are clear indicators of the impact of the new production technology in a positive direction.

#### **New Orientation**

A question which arises and needs to be answered at this stage is whether we should continue with our selective approach to concentrate our major efforts on a few selected areas known as Intensive Agricultural Districts/Areas or allocate the limited resources throughout the country equitably. From the point of view of over-all production, this selective approach continues to be valid in view of the objective of obtaining the highest marginal productivity to the scarce resources at our command such as improved seeds, fertilizers, irrigation and working capital. But this approach needs a reorientation in that the selective approach is not confined to a few districts. It should rather extend to the whole country with an emphasis to exploit the potentials of all areas,

blocks, villages, even individual farm-firms, consistent with the objective of obtaining the highest marginal product to the scarce farm resources of the country.

#### **Production Technology**

The practicability of this approach has enhanced due to the fact that the new production technology has developed in two directions: (1) technology, the adoption of which goes with the size of the farm and (2) technology, the adoption of which is irrespective of the farm size. The first category includes tractorisation, mechanisation of major farm operations, such as irrigation, harvesting and threshing. The second category consists of the use of fertilizers, insecticides, improved seeds, etc. The scope of the first category of technology seems to be limited in less prosperous areas and areas with low production potentials. It might be more suited to areas where holdings are large, incomes are high and a high degree of managerial skill exists. The second category of technology, however, can be used irrespective of these considerations. No doubt, these two categories of improved technology are complementary to each other, yet more emphasis on the first can be laid in comparatively more developed areas.

In other regions which have not yet touched a certain stage of development, but the potential exists with respect to type of soil and irrigation facilities, emphasis can be placed on an intensive use of the latter category of inputs and technology. In the IADP or IAA districts higher incomes have generally been generated, irrigation potential enhanced, and use of purchased inputs like fertilizer, seeds and insecticides increased. The stage is, therefore, set now to make necessary adjustments with respect to the permanent farm investments. In the Agricultural Intensive Districts like Ludhiana, where it is hard to find a farmer thrashing wheat with the traditional 'phalla' method and lifting water with the Persian wheel, the



direction has already been set. There is, however, a need at this stage to mechanise all major farm operations like ploughing, harvesting, thrashing, hauling and lifting of irrigation, etc.

### Actual Holding Size

An argument is often advanced that there is no scope for the large scale introduction of tractors on Indian farms because of their small size and the pressure of population on land. The IADP districts also unfortunately fall in this category of areas. It is, however, conveniently forgotten that when we talk of the size of the holdings, we normally make our observations on ownership holdings. No doubt the size of ownership holding in India and especially in these districts is very small. But, if we consider the operational holding, the situation is not that dismal. Depending upon the type of soil, irrigation facilities, etc., the operational size of the holding gets adjusted to the minimum power unit which the farmers can utilize most economically. In most cases the operational holding would, therefore, range between 12 acres to 16 acres. Where the minimum power unit is larger than two pairs of bullocks (a small tractor or a bigger tractor) the operational unit gets adjusted to a size large enough to become economical to operate. This is a very hopeful sign.

Operational holdings so far remained small because we had a low minimum power unit available to the cultivators. If this power unit is increased, we can expect the size of the operational holding to improve in order to make this power unit run economically. In the first instance, tractors and improved implements might be introduced on large farms. There is, therefore, scope for introducing these tractors on small holdings also. The size of the operational holding would, thus, go on increasing which in turn would set a healthy trend in terms of competitive production in agriculture. This will make it difficult

for those who do not move with the change to stay on in agriculture and the importance of ownership holdings will go on declining.

The trend has already set in with mechanisation of farm operations facilitated by the introduction of small tractors. Villages on the periphery of industrial cities find it difficult to find a tenant for renting out small holdings for which operation is no more economical. Those concerned with IADP need to orientate their extension efforts in this direction so that a phase of development where the operational size of the holding keeps on increasing through the introduction of machines could be set. Another programme of vital importance at this stage is co-operativisation of production and marketing in the Intensive Agricultural Districts/Areas. This is another device to enlarge the size of the farm firm. Here the direction has to be different from the past.

### Basis of Co-operatives

So far, the organization of co-operative societies, whether they were for agricultural production or for marketing or the village service societies, emphasised the number of societies organised, membership enrolled, share capital built up, etc. This led to a loss on the real content and philosophy of cooperation. The members of these cooperatives became more benefit-conscious than responsibility-and obligations-conscious. A basic principle of co-operation is that a cooperative should be organized where there is really a need and this need is or could be made a felt need of the cooperating members. Thus, the first step in the organization of a cooperative society should be in educating its prospective members more on their responsibilities and obligation to the society than on raising their expectation and making them only benefit-conscious.

Experience shows that even above average societies could not survive one business shock. It is

often forgotten that when a new organization like a cooperative enters a competitive field, it has to face cut-throat competition right in its infancy, because such an organization is considered a direct attempt to dislodge vested interests which in turn must react and try to dislodge such an organization. The members should understand the nature of these temporary losses for a few years, and learn to consider these as the cost of their business. It is here that the Intensive Development Programmes have to play an important role in consolidating the cooperatives so far organized, making them purpose-oriented co-operatives with a sound membership, prepared to meet all exigencies of business.

The role of cooperatives in production and marketing can be complimentary to a programme of mechanisation of farm operations and introduction of tractors on the small farms. If intensive and sincere efforts are made on these two programmes, the IADP would be entering a new phase in the development of agricultural economy in these selected areas. On the contrary, if they keep on intensifying routine efforts on the growth curve might level off and the marginal productivity of these efforts and inputs would decrease to a low level justifying the shifting of these programmes to new areas.

### Extension Efforts

With the revolution in production technology and with the stage of development which the IADP areas have reached, any further intensification of the routine type of extension education and of supplies to the farmers, will not bring the desired results. The direction of the efforts needs a distinct change, so that the business content of agriculture in these areas can be strengthened. The development of technology has given out a large number of alternative crops and crop varieties.

Today, the alternatives open to the farmer are not confined only to the sphere of crops but extend

to activities like producing of milk, milk products, meat, eggs, etc. The choice is so wide and complicated that it is difficult for a farmer with average education to decide on the optimum combination of farm enterprise. The choice within the crops and between crops and other activities or a combination of these farm enterprises with the choice of time and place for selling the produce, are some of those questions facing the primary producer which cannot be answered through the routine type of extension being currently provided. What is needed is a thorough understanding of the business of farming by the extension agency, so that they can tender business-like advice to the producers.

### Marketing Problems

Apart from this, the level of production in these areas which has shot up, is going to create (in fact it has already created) quite a few problems of marketing the produce. The current bumper harvest, although a considerable portion of it can be ascribed to good weather conditions, is going to repeat and increase further through time because a real breakthrough has occurred in production technology. It seems the markets do not have the capacity to accommodate and handle this produce, capacity seems to be inadequate, warehousing facilities do not seem to be sufficient, railway capacity to transport this produce to consuming areas is likely to fall short and purchase organizations do not have objective methods to evaluate the quality of the produce being brought to the market. The production is going to increase continuously in the future and so the marketing and storage problems will not be short-lived with us unless a concerted effort is made towards their solution. This is necessary to enable the IADP and IAA programmes to keep up the pace of development on which they have set today and to accelerate the growth further.

Under the present pattern of marketing, 50 to 70 per cent of the foodgrain and 80 to 90 per cent of the cash crops are marketed in the immediate post-harvest periods.

This creates gluts and slumps in the market which then work to the disadvantage of the producer. If market facilities are not improved by providing enhanced storage, warehousing, transport and credit facilities, these gluts and slumps will continue to persist in spite of the best intentions to the contrary on the part of the government. It might as a result become difficult to maintain a reasonable level of agricultural product prices. The extension agency of the IADP has a major role to play in this direction, firstly by directly influencing or prevailing over the market authority to create storage and other market facilities and, secondly, by educating the farmers in having their own stores and educating them on orderly marketing of their produce spread over the whole year.

### Need of the Hour

The Intensive Agricultural District Programmes therefore need to set these new directions in their efforts to meet the challenge of the revolution. The need of the hour is to make differential efforts on selected areas and even individual holdings with a potential so that improved technology of the second category discussed above gets going. It is only through the efforts in this direction that these areas can develop to a significantly higher level of agricultural growth. Proper exploitation of the different components of the revolution in agricultural production technology thus needs a selective approach so that its use is consistent with the potentials which exist and the level of development reached by different areas.

There is no single solution or a blanket recommendation which could go to all areas and all farmers alike. We have to tailor the improved technology to the requirements of the individual farmer depending upon the potentials and stage of development. It is here that the IADP has the most thrilling challenge to make the selected areas reach not only a take-off stage but to enable them to generate sufficient 'spark' to make the impact of the 'revolution' felt throughout the country.

# Incomes

F. A. MEHTA

THE 'Approach Paper to the Fourth Plan', released by the Planning Commission is in many ways a commendable document. Eager so far as possible to escape the perils of quantification, it is content merely to indicate the broad guide-lines into which presumably flesh and blood will be put, once some sort of a 'consensus' emerges from the deliberations of the National Development Council. Eager, again, not to 'dictate' one final desired rate of economic growth, it has indicated two alternative rates—one of 5 per cent necessitating a fresh investment of Rupees 200 crores and another of 6 per cent necessitating a similar investment of Rupees 250 to 300 crores. The preference of the Planning Commission is, predictably, for the latter, and more by implication than by assertion, it would appear that this is also the choice of the Development Council.

As is to be expected, the central question of resources is left strictly dangling in the air. In the first place, for the sake of clarification, it must be presumed that the above calculations of the additional inputs of capital investments are not at current but at constant prices, which means in effect that the volume of resource mobilisation will have to be upgraded for any inflationary impact. If the public sector plan outlay for 1968-69 is to be in the vicinity of Rupees 2,350 crores, and an additional Rupees 250 crores will be needed for the plan-initiating year of 1969-70, the total outlay will have to be Rupees 2,600 crores. If during this year (1968-69) there takes place an inflation of even 5 per cent, then it follows that an additional Rupees 130 crores will have to be provided as a rule of

thumb to keep intact the real or the project content of the annual plan outlay for 1969-70.

If this year's deficit turns out to be, say, only Rupees 150 crores—the anticipated deficit is Rupees 290 crores—then it follows that for the next year's plan allocations, at least Rupees 530 crores will have to be found if no deficit financing is to be indulged in. It is not surprising that the Deputy Chairman should warn that a very substantial resource-mobilisation effort will be needed to get the plan off the ground.

Even so, it is not clear whether there is not some under-estimation in the capital and current need of the agricultural sector. To sustain the momentum generated in this sector, it is clear that the capital-intensive stage into which the 'key' sectors of Indian agriculture have entered, will have to be further intensified; possibly, the capital-output ratio of the new phase is higher than that of the earlier stages, although this need not necessarily be so if the present response ratio of 10 to 1 continues to exist with the use of minor irrigation, fertilizers and high-yielding seeds. This will not take away the fact that Indian agriculture is certainly entering an immensely capital-intensive and credit-thirsty stage of its evolution.

Consider fertilizers; their imports alone for the next three years are planned at Rupees 750 crores, their credit requirements at Rupees 530 crores and their investment requirements at at least Rupees 500 crores. To complete the 300 schemes of irrigation (47 major and 250 medium and small projects) now under construction would alone require Rupees 850 crores. The implementation of a

buffer-stock policy of five million tonnes of food-grains would involve a capital cost of Rupees 500 crores, and experts assure us that this is a gross under-estimate. An expert body has estimated that in farm equipment industry, the value of power equipment alone works out to Rupees 120 crores, and adding the value of fuels and lubricants for farm prime-movers and replacement parts, over Rupees 300 crores will soon be invested every year in the "power" inputs to farm mechanisation.<sup>1</sup> The Dantwala Committee broadly estimated that the short-term credit requirements might be placed at about Rupees 1,000 crores in 1966-67 and about Rupees 1,200 to 1,300 crores in 1970-71.

### The Dilemma

Here then we are face to face with the central problem or dilemma of the present Indian economic situation, to which little or no clue is being given by the authorities concerned. As it is, the resource situation is critical. On top of it, the sector which requires ever-increasing dosages of capital and credit, namely, agriculture, is the very sector, which for reasons too well known to be elaborated here, generates the least amount of resources. Despite exhortations galore from the Planning Commission and despite elaborate tracts written by economists, there is very little hope of agriculture directly contributing to the tax-resources of the Central and State governments.

Taxing of agricultural inputs offers some possibilities, but it is to be remembered that after devaluation the prices of certain inputs, particularly of tractors and fertilizers, have already risen. Floating of debentures has also possibilities, but again of a limited type, as due to the excessively higher rates of interest known to be generally prevalent, their attraction cannot be really high.

A digression would here be in order. Foreign aid today, in sharp

contrast to the position of a few years ago, is heavily dominated by imports of fertilizers, pesticides and even tractors. One calculation even puts this agricultural-component of united foreign aid to be as high as 50 per cent. But with foreign aid itself being subject to vagaries, does it not leave us with a chilling fear that Indian agriculture, even if it is to some extent being made less dependent on the vagaries of the monsoons by the operation of the new agricultural strategy of selective concentration, has now itself become more dependent on the vagaries of foreign aid?

It is not enough that there be assured supply of water and high-yielding seeds; there must also be an assured supply of fertilizers and pesticides available at the right moment. With the heavy shortfall in fertilizer production now openly admitted, foreign aid, itself an uncertain factor in its dimensions, will have to be increasingly geared to fertilizer imports. It follows then that if the new agricultural programmes are not to be stranded in the very hour of their triumph, more and more of the otherwise shrinking foreign aid will have to be diverted to agriculture and less and less to industry.

### Rupee Resources

In the case of rupee resources, not only will the capital and credit requirements of agriculture legitimately command the first priority, but the goal of self-sufficiency, to the extent that it is increasingly achieved, will lower the rupee counterpart funds available for Central Government revenues, in so far as lesser quantities of P.L. 480 food-imports will be required. This underlines the necessity of utilising the past P.L. 480 counterpart funds if the government's budgetary position is not to be further jeopardised.

In the light of all these features, the necessity to tap agricultural incomes becomes all the more paramount. How at all can the fourth plan get off the ground when the very sector that commands a higher and

higher percentage share of the nation income, during the period of its transformation from subsistence to modern farming, demands not only a larger and larger share of assistance and allocations both of rupee resources and of foreign exchange, and yet is not able to release corresponding resources? If agriculture cannot contribute directly to plan resources, how can it be made to do so indirectly?

### Capital Investment

One idea is to let the favourable terms of trade take care of the private capital-formation in the agricultural sector. With a structure of land-holding in which about 30 per cent of the farm households have farms over the size of five acres and control anything between 70 to 75 per cent of the total area cultivated, it would be legitimate to expect that the favourable terms of trade would vastly assist the process of capital-investment, since it would be these groups which would evidently benefit the most from the strategy of selective concentration now employed.

The Draft Fourth Plan, for example, had shown an increase in the public sector outlay on agriculture over the third plan of Rupees 950 crores, but that in the private sector of only Rupees 100 crores. This certainly need not be so, and in all probability is not so, judging by the demands generated on a large scale for the 'unconventional inputs' ranging from chemicals and pesticides to tractors and trucks. In planning the allocations to agriculture in the public sector, this aspect needs to be taken into account. More specifically, when calculating the credit demands for agricultural inputs, it would be fair to assume, and correspondingly provide for policy purposes, lesser allocations, as those who can continue to consume more and more of these inputs would also be able to meet the credit and capital requirements from their own 'plough-back' resources.

In this connection, the Brahma-nand-Khusro thesis that higher

1. 'Assessment of Demand for Inputs to Farm Mechanisation' — A Report by a Committee of the Indian Society of Agricultural Engineers, New Delhi.

interest rates should be the guiding factor in credit allocation to the agricultural sector is fundamentally sound. It should tend to ensure better utilisation of credit facilities; it should restrain to some extent or the other the 'trafficking' in credit; and it should force the relatively well-to-do to use more of their own resources. To make this scheme applicable, a slab-system should be introduced with mounting interest penalties for larger consumption of credit, and the total credit package should be changed on the lines already introduced by the Reserve Bank for industry and trading.

### Deficit Financing

This would be one method of conserving public sector resources; the other method could be deficit financing. If more and more incomes are going more and more to the agricultural sector, a crisis of resources is created simultaneously with the crisis of recession.<sup>2</sup>

The former is created because the capacity to generate tax-revenues of the agricultural sector is limited, so that every rupee shifted to the rural sector from the urban centres means a net loss to the Central exchequer. Likewise, given the sharply different propensities to consume industrial products in the urban centres as against the rural areas, every transfer of a rupee would tend to bring about net reduction in the demand for industrial products. This demand in turn becomes even more depressed by the reduction in government revenues, which inevitably entails reductions in the outlays on industrial and transport sectors. Until some such time as agricultural incomes create a sizable demand for industrial goods, and, through the substantial excise-element of the latter, also step up the government's tax-revenues, some measure of deficit financing would in this transitional stage be inevitable. To the extent

that the increased agricultural income is 'sterilized', being used up neither in augmenting tax-revenues nor in stimulating industrial demand, it actually exercises a 'disinflationary' impact, during the period of its sterilisation, and to this extent the impact of deficit financing is neutralised.

Once again, although the agricultural sector itself generates no tax-revenues, it can, in normal circumstances, enable some measure of deficit financing to be indulged in during the period of continued favourable terms of trade, and thus exercise a relieving influence on the budgetary resources.

Thirdly, to the extent that in certain areas, agricultural prices do fall due to sizably increased production, industrial profits would tend to improve through reductions in the raw material bills and in the dearness allowance payable. With government participating directly as the major partner in industrial profits and with the increases in industrial production and possibly exports, government tax revenues would also start bulging. Even though in such cases there is some change in the terms of trade against agriculture, agricultural incomes need not go down but industrial profits will move up and with it government revenues.

### Vested Interest

Apart from the long-term benefits which are so obvious, private sector industry, trade and finance has an immediate vested interest in tapping increasing agricultural incomes, not only to find increased markets but also, through the tax-resources collected by the sale of goods, to relieve the severe pressure of taxation to which they have been exposed. It needs no profound analysis to state that the eventual hope of substantial reliefs in taxation for the private sector lies on the one hand in the improvements of the profits performance of the public sector units and on the other hand in the tax-revenue pay-back by the agricultural sector either directly through payments of income-taxes or,

more likely, indirectly through increased consumption of 'excise-rich' goods.

This task of tapping agricultural incomes is going to be neither easy nor economical in the short-run. With the exception of a few firms, the great majority of firms have only a vague and generalised relationship with the rural market. Significantly, while as early as 1961, pleas were made for carrying out elaborate market research in foreign countries for promoting exports, no such pleas have emerged until very recently for carrying out such studies in the rural areas. It is apparently not the Krishi Bhavan alone that has been caught napping by the rapidity of the agricultural breakthrough!

### Vague Notions

In spite of some excellent studies by the NSS and the NCAER, our basic understanding of the varying 'consumption-cultures' of rural India remains limited. Even when we can talk on a generalised level, we have only the vaguest idea of the disposal and discretionary incomes in the prospering areas of the agricultural sector. What are the time-lags and the leakages involved in the consumption pattern of these areas? When does most of the income accrue to the agriculturists? What part of his produce goes into hoarding and/or into self-consumption? What part of his income goes into repayment of debts with interest thereon? What part of it goes into purchase of gold or silver? What part does he plough back into his farm through purchase of seeds, fertilizers, etc.? What is the discretionary income then left?\*

While such studies are no doubt essential, the immediate require-

2. This point has been elaborated in 'The Present Recession and the Future Economic Growth' by F. A. Mehta, published in the Indian Merchants' Chamber Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Volume, 1967.

\* That even in general terms our understanding is imperfect is borne out by the fact that a year ago several authorities expressed complete confidence that after the bumper harvest, there would ensue a 'bumper' demand for consumer-goods industries. Some even argued that this would trigger off a chain demand for capital-goods, and thus with some time-lag, 'cure' the recession. Even the Planning Commission is reported to have expressed a fear of inflation in consumer-goods prices due to this 'bumper' demand.

ment would be to concentrate attention on those areas which may be said to constitute the 'pimples of prosperity'—the IADP and the IAA areas and so on. For most firms to rely on their own individual marketing or sales teams to scout the areas would be uneconomical, and a sort of a consortium for the purpose of distribution needs to be formed somewhat on par with those already formed in the export sphere. For, what now faces the country is the challenge not merely of production but of distribution.

### Biased Policies

Until recently, we have almost instinctively treated our distribution and trading firms as if they were 'the untouchables' of our developing economy. Our fiscal and monetary policies have never failed to reveal such biases against them. As in so many other economic spheres, so in this field, the logic of events have now dictated a change of approach. In Italy, we are told, trading firms are given a special relief in corporate taxation; we need to follow this example. If it is not found administratively impracticable, it is worth considering whether a firm which effects sales in rural areas could be given a relief from its profits liable to taxation to the extent of 2 per cent of such rural sales. Our distribution firms must now be given pride of place.

Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery, and Ward have done perhaps as much as the automobile to unite the rural and urban areas of the United States. When W. Rostow said four years ago that what many developing countries of the world really needed was a 'Sears, Roebuck revolution', he was magnificently anticipating the shape of things to come in India. No doubt, the time is not yet ripe for the mail-order purchases in India—neither our distributive systems, our packaging industry, nor our postal services are perhaps ready for this innovation, but the essential point is to recognise the role of the distribution organisation in the new economic transformation of the country. Once this is done,

the innovations necessary for the Indian economy will follow.\*

### Distribution Prospects

There are various facets of this 'distribution-revolution' whose implications need to be more clearly worked out. Now that commercial advertising has been permitted to be broadcast, the transistor set, already the status-symbol of rural India, can also become a powerful engine of commercial penetration into rural areas. The van has literally to serve as the vanguard, whilst the truck has potentialities in tapping agricultural incomes which do not even remotely seem to be recognised judging by the way State governments vie with one another and with the Centre in imposing all sorts of imposts and restrictions. But as J.R.D. Tata said, in his speech at the 60th Annual General Meeting of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay:

'A much improved road transport system less crushingly taxed than today must be built to provide the necessary link-up between rural and urban areas. The development of road transport will also bring more taxes to Government, for every truck that carries excise-rich goods to the countryside, whether it is sugar or cloth, or radio sets, will be a source of tax revenues.'

To sum up, the principal contentions of our paper are:

- (1) that the resource requirements of the fourth plan will in all probability be larger than those anticipated by the Planning Commission due to the capital-intensive stage into which the Indian agriculture is now entering;
- (2) that the greatest problem before the Indian economy

\* Little is it realised that the cry 'Go Rural' which now rings down the corridors of both government ministries and large corporations, carries an ironic condemnation of all parties concerned: Indian merchants in East Africa have done wonders penetrating the remotest villages in this group of countries with small truckfuls of 'consumer-goods'—even as late as two years ago this writer saw sales of Indian-made soaps in far-off East African villages.

today lies in the fact that the sector which needs the maximum allocation in terms of both rupee resources and foreign exchange is for some years itself likely to generate the least amount of resources in a direct manner;

- (3) but indirectly through processes mentioned earlier agriculture can play a great role in boosting up the plan resources; and
- (4) the eventual problem of discovering and developing the rural markets of India calls for a great challenge in the fields of distribution and transportation.

### Overall Perspective

It is not enough to achieve a farm revolution which is just beginning to take place in our country; it is also necessary to have a simultaneous series of major changes in other critical areas in order to maximise the advantage of an integrated growth. This thought has been admirably summed up in a paragraph from the study of 'Agriculture in 26 Developing Nations' which may conclude this article.

'Because of the necessity to build upon foundations laid in the past, less-developed countries cannot reasonably expect to achieve quickly agricultural output levels as high as those in much more economically advanced nations. In fact, even if farmers in countries like Pakistan and India were suddenly to produce as much physical output per farm worker as do farmers in the United States, it might still take years to build the transport, processing, and market facilities, the farm-industry or farm - non - farm employment balances, and the other supply-demand conditions needed to convert this increased abundance into valuable economic assets.'\*

\* Changes in Agriculture in 26 Developing Nations-1948 to 1963, p. 118.

# Dimension of research

J. S. KANWAR

BELIEVE it or not, a silent but visible agricultural revolution is taking place in India. The introduction of high yielding and fertilizer responsive varieties, new soil and water management techniques, high prices of foodgrains caused partly by the over-all food shortage and partly by the severe droughts of the last two years, have been the primary force responsible for this revolution. By the heavy use of fertilizers and better soil and water management practices, farmers have witnessed miracles.

From the same piece of land where a few years ago the farmers considered a production level of 3-4 ton grain/ha a significant achievement to boast of, even 10-12 tons is considered a minimum goal and 15-20 ton/ha is considered an immediately attainable possibility. Where previously 1 kg of N produced an additional 10 kg of

grain, with fertilizer responsive varieties 20-25 kg grain is being produced. The new technology has shown that the same quantity of water is capable of producing at least 2-3 times more food through scientific management of soil and water. Thus, one way of increasing the amount of water for irrigation is through the increase in the efficiency of water use.

Previously, farmers had the notion that the only way of producing more food was through bringing more area under the plough and by providing more irrigation facilities. The farmer was hungry for land and also for water. The agriculture technology of the last one decade has shown that instead of spreading in an horizontal direction we have to spread more in vertical direction. From the same area by using intensive crop rotation, high yielding varieties, heavy doses of ferti-

lizers and the judicious use of plant protection practices, one can increase the production per unit area per unit time many fold. The same function is served by fertilizers which was once served by acreage. One acre can be made to produce the same amount of agricultural produce as 10-15 acres of good land before the use of fertilizers and new seeds. In fact, it has now been realised that the small size of farms is not necessarily a handicap for production.

### New Era

Capital investment, better technology and the imagination of the farmer puts a limit on his production goals. We are now on the threshold of a new era in agriculture where the productivity will be dependent on the industry—fertilizer, insecticide, weedicide, fungicide and machinery—and socio-economic factors such as prices and marketing.

There was a time when agriculture was a means of subsistence where every farmer was trying to produce everything he needed. Obviously, this was a most inefficient use of resources because the land and water were not used to the best purpose for which they were suited. Modern agriculture means producing for the market. It involves the specialisation of agriculture according to capabilities and potentialities of the land. For instance, climate imposes certain restrictions on the production of some crops in certain areas. Any attempt to produce such crops will mean the inefficient use of resources.

In the recent symposium on cropping patterns organised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, it has been brought out very forcefully that by concentrating our efforts on production of certain crops in areas most suited for them, we can increase our national production 3-4 times, without much difficulty. If the available technical know-how is used, production can be increased by another factor of 2-3 times by rational selection of cropping patterns. The philosophy is simi-

lar to strengthening the efficient units of production in industrial parlance.

Some writers present a very dismal picture of the food situation towards the end of the century in the world and particularly in India. They seem to be more conscious of the requirements and the present limitations but not aware of the potentialities. Without going into many details of statistics, one can imagine that a country with 80-90 million acres of irrigated area should be able to produce without any difficulty, even with the present day known technology in agriculture, about 300 million tons of food per annum provided all the inputs such as new seed, fertilizers and pesticides are available and prices are remunerative.

Every progressive farmer is keen to know what is next in agriculture, what are the future dimensions of agricultural research. It hardly needs to be emphasised that no investment can pay such high dividends as investment in agricultural research. The benefit from such investment is incalculable. One can lift the nation from the position of starvation to affluence. The example of Mexico, Taiwan, and Israel are vivid reminders of this truth.

### Accelerating Factors

The factors responsible for production are: (i) seed, (ii) soil and water management, (iii) fertilizer, (iv) pesticides, and (v) machinery. All researches under the coordinated research schemes are directed to evolve more fertilizer responsive, shorter duration and higher yielding varieties which are less susceptible to pests and diseases. The dwarf germ plasm offers the possibility of increasing responsiveness to fertilizers. But it may be appreciated that the better seed alone cannot do any miracles unless it is combined with fertilizers and better soil and water management, and plant protection practices. Lack of this realisation can lead to poor results.

Plant is a biological food factory which uses energy from the sun and raw material from nutrients

and carbon dioxide. Scientists are endeavouring to increase the efficiency of this factor for the conversion of raw material with the help of the sun's energy into food material. Industry provides the fertilizers which are transferred into plant material. Introduction of dwarfness in wheat, rice, jowar and bajra has demonstrated the superiority of dwarf germ plasm to withstand heavy doses of fertilizers and thus produce more food per unit of fertilizer nutrient as the lodging susceptibility is reduced.

Man has been selecting crop varieties from time immemorial to suit his needs according to the times. When population density was low and animals were the only source of motive power, man's primary objective was to select more straw and hay producing varieties. But now because of the competition between man and beast for food, the primary objective is to produce more food for human beings which incidentally also produces an equally high amount of straw.

The single dwarf wheat or rice was an improvement over local varieties of these crops as they produced more food, per unit of nitrogen. The two gene dwarf and now the three gene dwarf wheats are further improvements, with a promise of a many times more potential in yield. The scientists are not content only with the quantity but they are also trying to improve the quality of the produce, changing the amino-acid composition of the varieties, which are building stones out of proteins.

### Essential Nutrients

Since the basis of yield potential of a variety is fertilizer responsiveness, therefore, a variety which can take more fertilizer and produce more gain per unit nutrient is preferable. Efforts in this direction are going on. It may be appreciated that for these fertilizer responsive varieties it is not only more nitrogen but even all the other nutrients such as phosphorus, potash, calcium, magnesium, sulphur and micronutrients



like iron, zinc, baron, copper, molybdenum and manganese which are required. Either they are to be supplied from the fertilizers or from the native sources of the soil.

The efforts of the soil scientists and agronomists are directed towards the determination of the nutrient needs of new varieties under different soil and climatic conditions and improving the efficiency of a given amount of nutrient. Modern agriculture is more industry-based and has to depend more and more on chemical fertilizers for obtaining high yields and maintaining fertility of soils.

The methods of application of fertilizers such as depth application in case of nitrogenous fertilizers and broadcast application for phosphates and spray application for micronutrients for increasing their efficiency are receiving attention. In view of the shortage of fertilizers, techniques are being developed to reduce the amount of fertilizers required for producing a good crop. The spray application of urea in combination with soil application has shown its efficiency for wheat and rice under many conditions. Even for un-irrigated conditions, techniques are being developed for making the best use of fertilizers.

#### **Changes in Micro-nutrients**

The exhaustive cropping and heavy yield mean a huge strain on the nutrient supply in the soil. Some of the nutrients which may not be deficient today will become deficient tomorrow. Therefore, there is a need for continuous research to study the changes in nutrients particularly micronutrients like copper, zinc, manganese, molybdenum, iron and boron in the soil. We cannot go on drawing upon the soil bank indefinitely without crediting the nutrient reserves. Intensive researches on micronutrients have been taken up. It is realised that the application of small amounts of micronutrients like zinc in spray is necessary for obtaining good yields of wheat, rice and many other crops. How much and where they are needed is the

future topic of study. How much of a particular fertilizer is required for obtaining a targeted yield of a crop from a soil, is another subject of study by soil scientists. It will enable the soil tests to indicate the fertilizer requirement for a given field and crop.

Since the new strategy in agriculture lies in increasing production per unit area per unit time, therefore, such cropping patterns which will maximise the production per acre per year are being evolved. The agronomists are endeavouring to develop suitable cropping patterns for different situations. It involves not only fitting the new varieties in the crop sequence, but also introducing new crops with better potentialities. Sugarbeet, soyabean, safflower are some of the new crops which seem to offer better promise than sugarcane and traditional oil seeds in many areas of north India. Research focus is on these crops. In fact there are numerous possibilities of introduction of new crops which need attention.

#### **Better Use of Water**

Farmers have the notion that irrigation is essential for increasing production but they seldom realise that for obtaining maximum efficiency from irrigation a very high technology is required. Even water as costly as the drinking water in towns can be used for irrigation with high technology. Efforts are being made in India to develop methods of water management for increasing the efficiency of water. Projects are being planned to harness nuclear energy for tapping underground water, manufacturing, fertilizers and operating an agro-industrial complex. Use of nuclear energy for desalinisation of sea water for use in agriculture is also contemplated. Sprinkler irrigation can be used for further economising and improving the efficiency of irrigation water.

In some advanced countries like the U.S.A., desalinised water is being used by researchers in plastic greenhouses for producing very high yields. In Arizona it has been observed that from 3 crops of jowar

in the plastic house, by increasing concentration of carbon dioxide four times and heavy doses of fertilizers, 70 tons grain/ha could be produced. In Ireland, Holland and Japan, flowers and out of season vegetables are being produced on thousands of acres under glass house conditions for export purposes. In India, under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's directions, new researches are underway for the utilisation of saline-alkali soils and use of saline water.

#### **Salt Tolerant Crops**

New trends in the utilisation of such soils involve introduction of salt tolerant crops like sugarbeet and safflower and breeding of varieties more tolerant to such conditions. In fact, a new innovation which I.C.A.R. scientists are trying to introduce is to build in such characters in the plants to enable them to withstand abnormal conditions such as high acidity, high alkalinity or high salinity. Agronomic techniques are being developed to raise crops under such abnormal conditions while trying to live with the problem.

Intensive cropping and relay cropping is possible only if the farmer has the power for timely operations. Research engineers are developing harvesters and thrashers for wheat, seed and fertilizer drills and pesticide applicators and many other agricultural implements for various operations. Minimum tillage as against maximum tillage which was the time honoured practice is receiving greater attention and seems to be more suited for relay cropping.

In India the fertilizer cost is very high and the fertilizer bill is a big item of expenditure for a farmer. It is realised that if we can use anhydrous ammonia directly the cost of nitrogenous fertilizers can be reduced to one-third to one-fourth of the present cost. Researches on ammonia applicator and use of anhydrous ammonia are being actively pursued.

The country cannot progress unless the production from unirri-

gated areas which form 4/5th of the total cultivated area also increases. Serious efforts should be made to develop techniques for increasing production from such areas by developing suitable soil and water management practices and short duration and drought resistant varieties. Water harvesting which aims at collecting the rainwater by suitably treating the soil and reducing the evaporation in the tanks by chemical treatment can be another fruitful line of investigation.

To sum up, an all-out effort is being made by research scientists to develop such crop varieties and soil and water management practices which can lead to many fold increases in production per unit area per unit time. The efforts are also being made to increase the efficiency of different inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides and water. If the proper changes in cropping patterns are brought about and new technology of agriculture adopted, India can produce enough not only for her own requirements in future but also for export. The food problem which is crippling the economy of the country can be solved by better attention to agriculture and particularly to agricultural research

Scientific and market oriented agriculture, based on the use of products of industry and know-how of research will bring the biggest revolution in history in this country. We are on the threshold of such a revolution and agricultural research provides the necessary ferment for this revolution. It hardly needs to be emphasised that in India the investment on agricultural research is hardly commensurate with the size of the problem. It is ridiculously low as compared with developed countries. It has to be remembered that agricultural research is not a luxury but a dire necessity. No investment can pay more dividends than the investment on agricultural research because its benefits when spread over millions of farmers' fields, lead to an incalculable increase in national production.

# Milk production

R. M. ACHARYA

THE evolution of new high yielding varieties of a number of cereal crops has caused a breakthrough in agricultural production. While we may be able to attain self sufficiency in cereal production, we are very much behind in non-cereal food needed for human consumption. Cereals alone do not make a balanced diet. There is a great deficiency of protein in our diet.

Part of the protein has to be from animal sources, of which milk is the most important. Although India possesses one-fifth of the cattle population of the world comprising 175.6 million cattle and 51.2 million buffaloes (1961 Census), milk production per year is only 205 million quintals, an appallingly low figure.

The average annual milk production of Indian cows is 173 kgs and of Indian buffaloes 491 kgs; this can hardly be compared with the average annual milk production of cows in agriculturally more advanced countries where it ranges from 3,500 kgs to 4,000 kgs. The present cattle provide 142 grammes of milk per capita against a minimum requirement of 284 grammes. This low per capita availability of milk, in spite of the very large cattle and buffalo population, is due to the extremely low productivity of these animals and lack of adequate nutrition.

India produces only two-thirds of the fodder and one-fourth of the

concentrates required for providing adequate nutrition to the present animal population. Surveys show, that 40-60 per cent of lactating cows and all dry cows and young stock are grossly underfed in most States in India. It has often been estimated that the milk yield of present cattle in India may be improved by 50 per cent by providing adequate nutrition.

### Static Genetic Potential

In addition to the poor nutritional status, the genetic potential for milk of most Indian cattle has been static. This is largely due to indiscriminate breeding, little or no selection for milk production especially in cattle and export from home districts of high yielding cattle to cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, where many ultimately end up in slaughter houses. There is very little salvaging of these cattle, although a number of schemes to maintain these after they go dry have been introduced. The low genetic potential can be further seen from the average production ranging from 700 kgs. to 1,650 kgs in some well managed herds of Haryana, Tharparker, Red Sindhi and Sahiwal breeds. This production is one-fifth to one-third of the average production of most well managed exotic herds of cattle.

The dairy industry in India with the present cattle is highly uneconomical because of their extremely low productivity and high cost of animal feeds and fodders. To make dairying profitable and provide sufficient milk for the teeming millions in India, we will have to provide, (i) adequate and as far as possible cheap animal feeds and fodders; this is possible through (a) increasing cultivated land under animal feeds and fodders, (b) reduction in the existing number of cattle to a manageable limit, and (ii) bringing improvement in the genetic potential of Indian cattle.

Efforts have been made in the improvement of fodders and for the development of economic

feeds. Introduction of paragrass, hybrid napier and high yielding varieties of lucerne to conventional fodder crops provide a much higher yield per hectare and have made green fodder available in the larger part of the year. Experiments conducted at the National Dairy Research Institute, Bangalore, show that 50 kgs to 55 kgs of green berseem or lucerne, 4 kgs of dry fodder and 100 gms of wheat bran can provide maintenance and production ration for a cow yielding 10 kgs of milk. This ration costs 50 per cent of the usual ration comprising largely dry fodder and concentrates, with only a limited quantity of green fodder. Urea has been used as a protein replacement. It not only provides a cheap source of protein but also increases the utilization of cellulose, a rich source of energy, present in coarse fibres, in the presence of molasses.

The problem of numbers is very critical. Because of the sentiments of the majority community against cow slaughter, there is little that can be done to reduce numbers immediately. Although the problem of providing adequate nutrition is very important, the author will concentrate largely on the improvement of the genetic potential for milk as a possible method of increasing the milk production of Indian cattle to the economic level.

### Selection

Selection and mating systems are the tools available to animal breeders for improving the genetic potential of their livestock.

Selection (producing progeny from genetically superior animals only) has been shown to be effective in bringing substantial genetic improvement in most of the European and American herds of dairy cattle. Sire selection has contributed almost 50 per cent to this improvement. Similar results on Indian dairy cattle have also been reported. Although the increase in production per year through selection has been to the extent of 1.5 per cent of the average milk production, yet this change is very low considering the average milk

production of most Indian cattle. Even with this high rate of genetic improvement, it will take 70-100 years to double the average milk production. The results of selection on Indian cattle are based on data collected in a few government cattle farms. Since there is no way of disposing off culled animals, especially females, these will continue breeding. Selection will not be, therefore, very effective in raising over-all cattle productivity in the country.

Sire selection can play an important role in improving cattle productivity but for the number that can be tested and the large costs involved in testing sires and the lengthening of the generation interval which causes this to be self defeating. A progeny testing station for producing tested sires of Haryana and Murrah breeds is in operation at Hissar. The low productivity of Indian cattle may be due to the low frequency of desired genes for milk production. Crossing Indian cattle with exotic breeds mostly of European origin has been practised in Military Dairy Farms and some other farms since the early part of this century with great success in increasing milk production.

Cross-breeding is generally used for (i) evolving new breeds or in grading up, (ii) for utilizing of heterosis (hybrid vigour). In the first case, cross-bred animals are retained for further breeding from generation to generation while, in the second case, cross-bred animals are generally produced anew in each generation from parent breeds or strains.

### Evolving Profitable Breeds

Our main purpose of cross-breeding in India is to evolve a new breed which is well adapted to the tropical climate, and produces sufficient milk to be profitable. Increased variability in second generation cross-breds produced through mating first generation crossbreds inter se, which forms the basis of the classical objection to breeding of crossbreds, has not generally been observed for milk production. This will not occur because (i) the greater part of

variation in milk production is environmental, (ii) there is a large number of genes controlling it, each gene has only a small effect, (iii) effects of genes are essentially additive and (iv) breeds involved in crosses are not genetically pure for milk production.

Most evidence available at present, (although not critical) indicates that most of the genetic variability in milk production is due to the additive effects of genes. In a large number of cases, performance of the first generation cross-breds has been observed to be very close to the mean of the parental breeds. There has been little evidence of hybrid vigour in this character on the contrary. Unfortunately, most of the experiments on cross-breeding were too inadequately designed to provide clear cut evidence of this point. Errors likely to be made in the selection of basic stock, of ill designed experiments, a tendency to use tested bulls on cows with below average performances and likely improvement in feeding and managerial conditions from parent generation to cross-bred progeny generation will tend to bias the results in favour of hybrid vigour.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research organised a seminar on animal breeding in Calcutta in December, 1966 in which the greater part of the discussion rested on cross-breeding. Exhaustive reports of work already done or work in progress in India were presented.

#### Experimental Data

A large body of data on cross-breeding of Indian cattle with exotic breeds of cattle particularly of European origin and carried out in Military Dairy Farms are available. Some data are also available from somewhat well planned cross-breeding experiments conducted at government and institutional breeding farms. The latter are, however, small in volume.

These available data have been analysed by a number of workers and they provide some evidence, although not conclusive, regarding

the relative effectiveness of Indian and exotic breeds involved in crossing and also on the grade of these crossbreds which provides maximum production. The average production of the various grades of different *Bos taurus* (European) X *Bos indicus* (Indian or Zebu) crosses as reported in the literature has been summarised and is presented in the accompanying table.

These results are mostly from non-experimental herds where cross-breeding was used without any clear-cut understanding of the objective. These are further based on crosses involving too few exotic sires of variable genetic worth and/or a small number of native females. Unknown and possibly differential amount of culling in various grades before any performance on them was available had been operative. Effects of herds, years, season of calving, age, lactation length, etc., which influence milk are largely present in these averages. These averages are, therefore, not strictly comparable. Their comparison does not tell us critically of the presence or absence of heterosis for milk production although it tends more towards the absence.

#### The Choice

In spite of a number of limitations, we may possibly draw some conclusions regarding the choice of exotic breed and the grade of the crossbred. Comparing the performance of various crosses, there does not seem to be any advantage in discriminating among the Harijana, Red Sindhi and Sahiwal breeds. Regarding the choice of exotic breed, Holstein-Friesian crosses seem to perform best followed by Ayrshire and Jersey. More recent cross-breeding results indicate Brown-Swiss to be a good contender of Ayrshire.

With regard to the choice of grading, the animals with exotic inheritance, close to 50 per cent (1/2 to 5/8) have the highest production, somewhat better reproductive efficiency and are well adapted, the latter being judged from mortality, abortions, still-births and the number of lactations completed. The results indicate

that as the percentage of exotic blood deviates very much from half on either side, the overall productivity declines.

#### Indian Exotics

The average milk production of exotics or grades having almost 100 per cent exotic blood although based on a very limited number of animals, has been observed to be better than any other grade. On the basis of the additive scheme of gene action and the assumption that cross-breeding simply increases the frequency of desirable genes for milk production, it should be possible to grade up Indian cattle with exotics and produce Indian exotics which may perform as well or even better than the imported exotics in India. Increase in exotic blood beyond half will definitely require better nutritional and managerial conditions. Decline in production of higher grades might have been due to the non-availability of these conditions. This, however, is less probable, since most of the data pertain to Military Dairy Farms. This could also be due to lack of adaptability to tropical conditions. To the extent the latter cause has been operative, which seems more plausible from the evidence available, we shall have to stop at half of the exotic inheritance and make further improvements through selection. This will be easier since we will not need continuous importation of exotic bulls or frozen semen.

Although there have been only a few attempts at inter-breeding cross-breds, the results have been conflicting. More recent evidence of inter-breeding cross-bred (Jerseys produced by crossing interse of 3/8—5/8 Jersey X Sindhi cross-breds at Allahabad Agricultural Institute, and second generation cross-breds produced by crossing first generation cross-breds of Jersey X Harijana crosses at Harringhatta) indicates that there is little decline in production in the generation produced by inter-breeding crossbreds.

It may be inferred from the evidence available that the introduction of 50 per cent exotic inheritance from any European or

**Average milk production in Kg. of different grades of crosses between exotic and Indian breeds**

<i>Indian Breeds</i>	<i>Grades</i>	1/8	2/8	3/8	4/8	5/8	6/8	7/8	<i>Ayrshire</i>
<b>AYRSHIRE</b>									
Red Sindhi	1,392.2 (976)*	—	1,505 (46)	1,531 (6)	2,137 (224)	2,325 (40)	2,032 (170)	1,916 (9)	2,426 (8)
Sahiwal	2,121 (555)	—	1,833 (3)	—	2,690 (667)	—	1,764 (15)	—	2,426 (8)
Haryana	1,350 (669)	—	1,840 (7)	—	2,494 (231)	—	2,104 (23)	—	2,426 (8)
<b>HOLSTEIN FRIESIAN</b>									
Red Sindhi	1,435 (372)	—	2,376 (10)	—	3,242 (489)	—	—	—	—
Sahiwal	1,711 (591)	1,785 (106)	2,227 (326)	1,949 (253)	3,077 (602)	2,725 (157)	2,896 (331)	2,990 (38)	4,266 (11)
Haryana	1,390 (623)	—	1,959 (82)	—	3,598 (63)	3,597 (36)	3,341 (100)	3,240 (16)	—
<b>JERSEY</b>									
Red Sindhi	1,234 (96)	1,916 (3)	1,572 (77)	—	2,045 (307)	—	—	—	—
Haryana	848 (72)	—	—	—	2,138(F1) (80)	—	—	—	—
					2,266 (F2) (9)				

\* Figures in brackets are numbers on which means are based.

American dairy breed will increase the average milk production from 3-10 times.

Observations on the workability of crossbred bullocks indicate that these are as good as most Indian draught or dual purpose breeds, although not as fast. Absence of the hump is of little consequence as neck muscles are responsible for pulling the load. Most crossbreeds have a long and strong neck which gives them the ability to perform better. Disposal of crossbred males should not, therefore, pose any serious problem.

#### ICAR's Project

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has planned a number of cross-breeding projects involving different breeds of Indian cattle and most of the important breeds of exotic cattle (Holstein, Friesian, Brown Swiss and Jersey). These experiments will provide a reasonably large number of contemporary individuals in different crosses and their grades (first generation and second generation crossbreds, 3/4 exotics made by back crossing half-breds to exotic parents, and three breed crosses). The performance of these groups will be compared among them and with a contemporary group of Indian purebreds maintained under similar environmental and feeding conditions.

Such a comparison will provide answers to the questions on the choice of different exotic breeds, the extent of exotic inheritance that will provide well adapted high yielding strains, presence or absence of heterosis and possibility of evolving a new breed through mating interse of half-breds or through grading up. One of such coordinated projects involving the Haryana breed in crosses with Holstein Friesian, Brown Swiss and Jersey has been initiated at the Punjab Agricultural University, Hissar campus. A number of projects involving foreign collaboration (Indo-Swiss Project in Kerala, Indo-Danish Project in Mysore and Indo-German Project in Himachal Pradesh) are also in progress.

There is little doubt that the crossbreds of Indian cattle with

cattle of the European and American origin produce 3-4 times or even more milk than the purebred natives. The present crossbreeding projects will produce crossbred animals numbering a few thousand in the next 3-5 years. This will not be sufficient to have a big impact on milk production in the country, although they will provide answers to a few questions. An immediate solution to the problem of ending the milk famine will be the introduction of crossbreeding on a large scale. Like high yielding varieties of cereal crops, the crossbred animals will require definitely better inputs in terms of nutrition and management. The Central Government, in collaboration with the State governments has already started an Intensive Cattle Development Programme on similar lines to the Intensive Agricultural Development or Package Programme.

#### Higher Yield

In milk shed areas where sufficient feed and fodder is available and where a large market for milk exists, crossbreeding using frozen semen from exotic bulls may be introduced. These animals will produce at least 300-400 per cent more than their Indian dams. Although there will be no harm in intercrossing halfbreds and producing second generation crossbreds, information may become available on the best course to follow after the first cross by the time this stage is reached. It may be possible to introduce an exotic inheritance beyond half in case the managerial and nutritional conditions permit.

Since we cannot wait for all the critical evidence on various aspects of crossbreeding to become available, crossbreeding in Intensive Cattle Development Programme areas and also in those areas where cattle are non-descript, may be introduced on a large scale. Crossbreeding in home districts of well known Indian breeds may be avoided or some large herds of Indian breeds be maintained at government farms and improvement in them be brought about through selection.

# Education

ASHOK THAPAR

AGRICULTURAL development does not come free. It calls for substantial investment, and not just in material inputs such as better seeds and more fertilizer or in physical capital such as dams and canals, but in increased human skills, knowledge, inventiveness and productive capacity as well.

The problem in India is no longer one of getting agriculture moving. It is one of keeping it going. But the very success with which the new high-yielding varieties have made their impact felt in so short a span is itself cause for some concern. For it is obvious that it has turned the energies of politicians and administrators, both at the Centre and in the States, almost exclusively to the problems of securing the necessary inputs and ensuring adequate returns to the grower, and away from the critical need to mount a vigorous programme

for more investment in the country's research and extension education networks.

Research has opened the way to a new technology. But this new technology cannot by itself be relied upon to lay the foundations for ever rising levels of productivity in the years ahead. The task of the agricultural educator does not end with finding and making available effective answers to the soil exhaustion and disease susceptibility problems created by the wide-spread use of the new varieties. These are merely the 'mopping up' operations that must inevitably follow a strategic advance and it is something to be thankful for that they are beginning to receive the attention that they deserve from research workers.

What, however, seems to be in danger of being lost sight of is the

need for continuous innovation. A break in the process will not only jeopardise whatever slender chances there are of sustaining growth to keep pace with the unchecked increase in population but also place a ceiling on the limited objectives of the present high-yielding varieties programme.

The programme aims at increasing the production of foodgrains by 25.5 million tons by saturating 32 million acres in selected districts with high-yielding seeds together with the necessary inputs. Sixteen million acres were to be covered by July this year. But it is doubtful if these will have produced an additional 12.75 million tons (or roughly half the total target) even by 1970.

What is expected from each acre is a little under one additional ton in output, over and above what is being produced already. This can no doubt be achieved by exceptional districts like Ludhiana and Tanjore. But in other areas it will be fortunate if average output per acre lags no more than half way behind the desired level. The reasons for this comparative failure will not be far to seek.

#### Non-conventional Input

In a situation bound by tradition, an equilibrium gets established between inputs and knowledge at a much lower level than what is desired, observes Dr. S. S. Johl, Professor of Economics and Sociology, Punjab Agricultural University. His penetrating analysis of the intensive agriculture district programmes makes it clear that if the grower is to be stimulated to higher and higher achievements it will not be enough merely to make the necessary inputs more easily available. Supplies alone cannot activate the business sense of the farm operator. It needs to be fed with a continuous stream of non-conventional inputs, such as improved management patterns and more efficient formulae leading to the rational use of available supplies.

It is the present inability to provide him with this continuous stream of knowledge which, more

than anything else, exposes the utter inadequacy of effective as opposed to theoretically stipulated, institutional arrangements for research, training and extension education.

#### Meagre Funds

The problem is two-fold: inadequate financial allocation and the inability or refusal to exact optimum results from the little that is available. To begin with, compare the paltry Rs. 25 crores originally set apart in the fourth plan for the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, with the lavish Rs. 50 crores earmarked for the Department of Atomic Energy, or for that matter the generous sum of Rs. 24 crores allotted to the Ministry of Education for 'anthropological, botanical and allied activities of the department of science', which is, of course, quite in addition to the Rs. 46 crores provided for the programmes of the C.S.I.R. Not surprisingly, India continues to lead the world with the lowest number of agricultural research workers per 100,000 of the people active in agriculture. The current figure is less than three, compared with six in Pakistan, 60 in Japan, 79 in Taiwan and 133 in the Netherlands.

Secondly, there remains the problem of getting the States to make the switch from a static to a dynamic system of agricultural education. The dynamic approach is embodied in the new agricultural universities, of which there are now eight in the country. But Punjab apart, none of the other seven States in which these institutions are located has so far even succeeded in pushing through the legislation required to enable these universities to perform the functions that they were intended to.

The need for bringing about a very close integration of research, teaching and extension is no longer in dispute. A dynamic agriculture throws up far too many problems in rapid succession. If research workers are to play a useful role they must remain in contact with extension personnel in order to know what is happening in the field. For similar reasons so must

teachers. The old text-book-cum-dictated-lecture approach can at its best lead to the production of students equipped to deal with yesterday's problems and no more. This goes for extension workers, too.

It is not enough merely to be able to observe new problems in the field. Such observation is only a prelude to learning the new answers and this can be done only through working contacts with the centres of research. The prompt and effective transmission of ideas between these three services is precisely what the agricultural universities were designed to facilitate.

But in practice, there has turned out to be many a slip between the cup and the lip. Development cannot be achieved without conflict. Administrators, like the rest of us, do not in general like to change their ways. Severe opposition from the local State departments of agriculture has resulted in crippling the growth of the new universities.

#### Punjab's Success

Punjab is the only State so far to have made its university the sole agent for agricultural research. It is this step which has been primarily responsible not only for the range and scope of its programmes but also for the rapport that it has established with farmers, and the consequent success of its extension efforts.

Elsewhere, the absence of this dominating status has played havoc. In Orissa, it has prevented the university from becoming any more than an enlarged teaching shop, compelling its first Vice-Chancellor to resign in disgust. At Udaipur, the Rajasthan Agricultural University is again essentially the mere College of Agriculture that existed earlier. It has been able to initiate neither research nor extension on any substantial scale.

In Andhra Pradesh, the barracking from local officials is seen at its worst. The campus at Rajendranagar is well equipped and has a



series of admirable rice research programmes to its credit. But since it is located near Hyderabad, which is miles from the main rice belt in eastern Andhra Pradesh, it has not been able to undertake any extension activity worth the name. This remains the preserve of the Department of Agriculture. Since the two are at loggerheads a great deal of time and energy is lost in relaying the research worker's findings to the field, and in providing him with the feed-back of information that is so necessary to make research programmes relevant to the State's problems.

In Mysore the outlook is brighter, with a strong emerging university modelled on the lines of the P.A.U. at Ludhiana. In U.P. the University at Pantnagar has to compete with other research centres but has nevertheless developed a powerful research wing, which together with the proposed seed corporation project, should soon provide it with the means to undertake extension on a larger scale. But not till it pushes its tentacles into blocks and districts outside the Terai area can it expect to develop into a major force.

All said, it remains a vicious circle. It is not suggested that each of these institutions can grow overnight into full-fledged centres of research, training and extension. What calls for emphasis is that they cannot even begin to grow till the legal and administrative cobwebs surrounding them are cleared away. Not till they have grown can they equip themselves with various specialist branches and faculties. Not till these faculties have been developed can they take on the responsibility of supplying the States with the highly trained professional mechanism required to sustain the transformation of agriculture. Without this mechanism there must remain the danger that despite the new technology 'an equilibrium will be established between inputs and knowledge at a much lower level' than is either necessary or desirable.

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# Social structure

T. R. GUPTA

A DISCERNIBLE change in agricultural technology has taken place during the past few years in India, especially in States like Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab. The increasing use of high yielding seeds and other improved farm inputs holds the promise of taking our agriculture out of the morass of the subsistence level. Two unprecedented bumper harvests of the year 1967-68 (even though a considerable portion of the gain can be attributed to extremely good weather conditions) and the hope of still better ones in the future provide an explicit basis for considerable confidence and optimism at all levels. This must affect our economic and social order in many ways.

An economic organisation follows a biological path in the sense that any change in any part affects the whole system. The problem in the case of an economy is, however, different to that of a living organism. Here it is difficult to predict the exact nature

and the extent of the change(s) due to a change in a particular economic variable

In the present context, for example, we can say that the ensuing technological change in agriculture will bring about an increase in agricultural production which in turn does not merely mean self-sufficiency in foodgrains, but is also expected to provide the much needed moral courage and confidence for our people. The uncertainty regarding the implementation of the industrial plans of the country may disappear as more human and machine-made food becomes available. Similarly, the net profits in agriculture will increase through increasing intensity of cropping and changes in the cropping patterns.

### Significant Changes

This will also bring about a change in investment and occupational patterns and in income distribution and consumption patterns. Price relationships between goods and services within the same sector and those relating to different sectors of the economy will be reshaped. The educational structure will also be affected. As a consequence (or in the course) of these changes the social, cultural and religious values and institutions such as family and caste, etc., will be affected. The precise direction and speed of these changes is, however, difficult to foretell.

This paper, therefore, does not purport to present a balance sheet of the socio-economic costs and benefits of the changing face of agriculture in India. The views expressed are more in the nature of generalisations about the likely implications of the new situation vis-a-vis our economic and social fabric.

It may be recognised that even though the general situation is fast improving, there are significant gaps in the development of our agricultural technology. While the impact of improved varieties of crops like wheat, paddy, maize, bajra etc., for example, is obvious, the situation with regard to crops

like jute, vegetables, fodder and other agricultural enterprises, such as dairy, poultry etc., has not changed much.

### Imbalances

This means that the relative profitability for the first group of crops has increased and this will lead to imbalances in the cropping patterns and the price relationships between agricultural commodities. Moreover, the full package of inputs needed for harnessing the advantage of a varietal improvement in the case of a particular crop has not been developed. The resulting imbalance is clear from the fact that a State like Orissa, which is rice growing, faces a drought every third year in succession for want of assured irrigation. These situations may unfold in many ways.

Firstly, the imbalance in technological development gives an added advantage to certain areas. As a result the existing gaps in incomes between regions will be further widened. Moreover, considerable differences between different areas have developed in the price levels of agricultural commodities, especially foodgrains.<sup>1</sup> The proportionate expenditure on foodgrains in some regions is, thus, increased while that in others (those with increased incomes) may even go down as the consumption pattern gets diversified. With the increasing imbalances in incomes, the existing regional differences in the attitudes towards life, i.e., matters of economic, social and political interest, may be further strengthened.

To check this trend attempts must be made to bring about the desired improvement in the remaining crops and other agricultural enterprises. Facilities for teaching and research in agriculture need to be expanded on a priority basis in those areas where they are deficient. This is important as the research results achieved in one area are not generally applicable to another because of

agro-climatic differences. Benefits from these measures do not lie only in terms of increased agricultural production all round. Regional specialisation in crops should be encouraged which in turn would increase the economic interdependence between the regions, and the much needed balance of economic power and economic well-being can be brought about.

Through economic integration lies the way towards social and cultural integration—national integration in the real sense. Failing this, groupism and regionalism which have already done considerable damage to the nation may be further encouraged and our uncertainties may, thus, increase.

In those areas which have already felt the impact of the new technology, the production of foodgrains may rise faster than that of commercial crops and the farm products which provide protective foods. Contrary to this, the demand for the latter products, particularly nutritive foods, may rise faster as a result of increased incomes. The price structure between commodities will thus be altered to the advantage of the latter group. This means that the change in food habits may not come quickly and to the extent desired. Moreover, the prices of foodgrains may have to continue to be supported to keep up the incentive for increased production. Such programmes have their own implications.

### Income Inequalities

While the small producer who has a little marketable surplus will not derive much benefit, an appreciable portion of the advantage will go to the large land holder. Inequalities in income distribution within the same region would thus increase. This effect would be further heightened as the small farmer would not be able to take full advantage of the improved technology for want of resources.

The cure calls for further and progressive taxes on the agricultural sector. Proposals such as the in-

<sup>1</sup> See, 'Report of the Agricultural Prices Commission on Price Policy for Kharif Cereals for 1967-63 Season', Government of India, September, 1967, p. 35.

roduction of an agricultural income tax in those States where it is not in operation or the imposition of an improvement cess, etc., should be scrutinised with a sincerity of purpose at the policy making level. Suffice it to say that something needs to be done fairly soon.

Secondly, facilities for farm machinery need to be made available to the small producer on hire. This may be done through co-operatives or other developmental agencies. The small farmer must also be assured his share in the scarce inputs like improved seeds, fertilizers, etc. To achieve this, the system of distribution of these items will have to be reorganised.

This step may be considered as being in conflict with the principle that the resources must find their way into those channels which promise the highest marginal productivity. This economic consideration, however, is clearly at variance with the social and economic objectives of a democratic system. The concept of the survival of the fittest does not work in a welfare State. We must take care to see that those who survive do not merely exist to spread dissatisfaction and gloom. They must live.

#### Corrupt Practice

To the extent that a promise and/or prospect of increased profits generates a desire for increasing production through the adoption of improved technology, such a change in the situation is certainly desirable. Complexities, however, arise when the desire for higher profits grows faster than the actual improvement in technology. In the States of Punjab and Haryana for example, this has given birth to black market in seeds<sup>2</sup> and instances of the theft of standing crops at the research station. Again, the practice of offering bribes for jumping the queue when it comes to buying a tractor or getting a power connection for irrigation seems to

2. The prices of certain varieties of wheat seed (quality not certain) were reported to be between Rs. 500-800 per kg. or one rupee for one grain.

have increased. These situations create a corrupting influence and vitiate the whole social atmosphere.

Similarly, the unprecedented increase in demands for agricultural machinery in recent years has resulted in the development of a monopolistic market in these items. As a result, the manufacturer seems to have completely lost the incentive for production research (which ought to be a continuous process) and consequent improvement in quality of the equipment. The quality of wheat threshers used in Punjab—probably the best available in the country—clearly illustrates this.

#### Risks in Mechanisation

While the equipment costs a fortune, its user is exposed to tremendous physical risks. A report that 700 persons were injured in the Ludhiana district of Punjab alone during the last threshing season is of particular significance. This may mean that the logical impact of mechanisation in terms of reducing the drudgery of physical labour on the farm and thus increasing the pleasure derived from work may not be felt to the desired extent if we continue to proceed the same way. This can ultimately frustrate some of our efforts and provide an easy argument to the opponents of the process of mechanisation in agriculture. This is important in the land of dogmas and superstitions.

Specialisation in the production of a few crops in a particular area will increase the importance of the market mechanism. Significant consequential effects of an economic and social nature may be felt through increased monetisation of economic transactions and the increased rural-urban contact. The increased use of money is expected to further the subjectivity of human behaviour to economic considerations. This in turn will weaken the value of age-old considerations such as caste, religion, arranged marriages, and taboos on certain types of food. Modes of thinking will, however, not change equally for all age groups. Social relations between the older gene-

ration and the young may thus be strained.

#### Sub-division of Holdings

One major implication of this may be that the trend towards the establishment of 'nucleus' families gets accelerated. If alternative employment opportunities are not made available, this may lead to the sub-division of family holdings and thus reduce the economic efficiency of the farm.

A healthy impact of the change in the institution of the joint family may be that the roles which were hereditary in the past will now be conditioned by the operation of economic forces. An individual's social status will be 'achieved' through his own effort rather than being 'ascribed' on the basis of the caste and clan to which he belongs. This, in its turn, is likely to increase the economic incentive; it may encourage migration from the farm and thus reduce the pressure of the work force on land. It can also be expected to reduce the birth rate.

Social attitudes and the economic incentives of people in rural India will also be affected through the entry of urbanised people in the profession of farming. Until recently there was a slow and one way migration from the rural to the urban centres. With the improved economic prospects in agriculture, retired people from the defence and civil services and even businessmen are settling on the land. The attitudes of these people towards life and its problems are considerably different from those who have always lived in the village.

In the short run this may create certain problems of adjustability between these divergent groups of people. But the overall impact of this contact, in the long run, must work out favourably. The migrants are expected to provide a dynamic economic and social leadership.

The new technology is bound to affect the patterns of rural living and consumption. People are shifting from houses in the village to farm-houses. Thousands of

farm houses built on modern lines have, for example, sprung up during the past six months in the Punjab and Haryana.<sup>3</sup> This is sure to affect the traditional forms of association vis-a-vis social outlook.

### Change in Values

On the consumption front, even though the change is likely to be conditioned by change in social values, conspicuous demands for items such as alcoholic drinks and durable consumer goods is expected to increase. The demand for protective foods like milk, meat, poultry, etc., is also expected to increase. This again calls for gearing up the production effort of all farm products and for an orderly development of the manufacturing sector so that the increased demand for these products does not lead to a rise in prices. Increased availability and the use of small items of comfort such as furniture, machines, fans, radio and transistor sets, pressure cookers etc., and better housing facilities will, besides checking wasteful expenditure, develop an interest in a higher standard of living.

On the social side, the increased use of manufactured goods and other household appliances is expected to provide the women with more leisure within the household routine. This in turn can mean leisure for education and specialised training. As a result more teachers and social workers are likely to become available for work in rural areas. The children will receive better care. The whole process of nation building may thus be affected favourably.

With increasing productivity and profits in the wake of technological change, prices of land are rising fast. The rate of growth of the average price of land per acre in the States of the Punjab and Haryana for example, is estimated at 11.8 per cent per annum for the five years ending 1965-66.<sup>4</sup>

The market in land is changing from a buyer's to a seller's market. The impact of this change is likely to be felt in many directions.

Social and economic status attached to land ownership will be appreciated and this may adversely affect the mobility of labour. In times of need, when cash is required mortgage will be preferred to sale of land. This will adversely affect the investment activity in land. Similarly, there may be more cases where the right of pre-emption will be exercised. The law of inheritance which guarantees an equal share to daughters in their father's property, but which has rarely been put into practice so far, is expected to become more effective. All this would lead to increasing social tension, to the sub-division and fragmentation of land, and to reduced investment in agriculture which in turn will stand in the way of the optimum utilisation of a scarce resource.

### Technological Change

What has been discussed here is largely in the nature of a few thoughts on the problem. In reality, the implications of a factor like technological change have no foreseeable end. This discussion, however, should emphasise the point that wide ranging issues of an administrative, economic and social nature are involved in technological change which in turn call for changes in policy. The impact of the initial change in agriculture on the economic development and social structure of the country will depend on the change in the manufacturing and tertiary sectors of our economy and on research programmes and public policy. The last is probably the most important because problems like the increasing inequality in incomes and levels of living need to be tackled fast. We have certainly moved upward. The need at this stage is for an all-round and orderly movement without which the 'change' may not lead to development and the label of a 'static economy in progress' may continue to be applied to India.

3. *The Times of India*, New Delhi, June 6, 7, 1968

4. T. R. Gupta, and Gurbachan Singh, 'Agricultural Taxation in Punjab and Haryana'. Manuscript, Punjab Agriculture University, Ludhiana, 1968.

# Books

## STUDIES IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE: THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE

By Gilbert Etienne.

Oxford University Press, Bombay; pages 343.

Etienne's *Studies in Indian Agriculture* is unique in two ways. Firstly, he provides a close personal insight into the inter-actions of planning on village life, and particularly on agriculture at the very grass roots. He has tried to put himself in the position of the peasant, on the one hand, and of the administration, on the other, as far as agricultural development is concerned. He is perhaps one of the very few Indian or foreign developmental economists, who has taken the trouble to go and live with his family in Indian villages for the greater part of the year. Whilst there, he has tried to look at what is 'viable and effective', not what seems desirable from a city chair. There is, therefore, a refreshing breath of first-hand practical experience in four districts of India, Bulandshahr, Banaras, Tanjore and Satara.

The second quite unique feature of this study is its framework. It begins with a broad political and economic framework of India, with an emphasis on agricultural policy. It then takes one to each of the States, the U.P., Madras and Maharashtra, in which the districts proposed for the study are located, and from the State, the reader is taken down to the village, the block and the district. Most of the book is a description of what he finds at the grass roots, with farmers, in their wide variety of castes, land-holdings and social traditions, of administrations and politicians, applying different methods in different places. The concluding chapters are a synthesis, a gathering-in of the threads of investigation, evidence, and argument with regard to the main purpose of this study.

The structure of this study reminds one of the way F. G. Bailey knit together the various strands of his sociological study of the village, the district, and the State in Orissa, in his *Politics and Social Change*. Etienne goes down to the village, but comes up to the surface to portray his conclusions on an all-India canvas, carefully pointing out the dangers of a dogmatic belief in one or two patterns of rural development. His treatment is a synthesis of micro and macro elements in a complex sub-con-

tinental situation. In the scope of the architecture of this book the final synthesis, like an entablature, has a touching frieze on it in the last paragraphs in which, after reading of all the divisiveness of caste society, after the corruption and inefficiency of much of the development programmes at the village and block level, Etienne salutes 'the innate dignity of this civilization'. 'Essentially agrarian, it has an invigorating quality not only in its farming techniques, but also in its festivals and rights, the offerings to the Mother Goddess in the courtyards of their houses, the ritual bath in the Ganges in December, the departure on a long pilgrimage to the Himalayas.' Behind all the shortcomings in his report, there is an underlying respect for the Indian farmer, a product of an old civilisation responding to new urges; besides, an understanding of the stupendous developmental tasks of the Indian administration.

Right through the book Etienne's approach has been sound, balanced, and pragmatic. He has tried not to be swayed by other pre-conceived western ideas of Indian development, or by official Indian ideologies and solutions. He has taken a hard look at what the Indian official has been trying to do, at what the farmer has done and needs and the gap between which still awaits bridging.

Emerging from months of village experience in four diverse districts of India, the author produces two main theses. The first is that the earlier doctrinaire policies based on comprehensive community development plans, on land reforms, on co-operatives, on Panchayats and Zilla Parishads, and on the constitutional commitment to universal education, are not the effective answers to the Indian agricultural problem. To him, they are 'the blind alleys'. Wherever else they lead, they do not lead to the first priority in rural development, significantly higher production. Nor does he find the farmers' response to ambitious community development projects, to co-operatives and Panchayats, matching the expectations of the planners and the administrators. There is a gap between desires and reality. He is not the first to make this discovery, but he is the first to project it on to the larger canvas; apart from the study of an individual village or the specific

study of co-operatives. In this regard, thoughts go back to at least two other studies, those of Daniel Thorner, and of Gerald D. Berriman\*.

Of all the village programmes since independence, the one which comes out worst is that of Panchayats and Zilla Parishads. Etienne's first-hand account of the working of the Panchayat in Khandoi, Bulandshahr district, bears a marked resemblance to Berriman's account of the working of the Panchayat in Sirkanda, Dehradun district. In Khandoi, the first meeting took place in 1954, with an impressive agenda covering a wide variety of tasks, from the income and expenditure of the Panchayat to *shramdan*. The numbers of meetings over the years dwindled till 1958, after which the Panchayat was dormant. In the year in which Etienne lived in the village, 'not one *shramdan* activity took place'. He concludes, 'One does not find in Khandoi large awareness of the collective interest, or any means of creating or spreading of such awareness.' Even in the surrounding villages he finds there is hardly one Panchayat that is working even at minimum efficiency.

In the village of Kila Ulur in Madras, the Panchayat functioned much better. The Panchayats in Satara were in-between. This study only confirms many previous ones, that there seems to be a pattern in the inability of village people to collaborate in village tasks, be they co-operatives or Panchayats.

In States like Madras and Maharashtra, they show a greater aptitude for it. In the traditionally Hindi speaking areas, and in the whole of the north, one has to fall back on Berriman's sociological finding that there is 'an absence of an effective tradition of community co-operation', and that there is also 'an absence of a village-wide acceptance of formal leadership'. Co-ordination mainly lies in the traditional relationships of upper castes to lower castes, and hardly ever in group activities for the betterment of the village as a whole, cutting across caste barriers.

Etienne deplores the absence of priorities in local bodies like Panchayats and parishads and in community development, but it is difficult to expect priorities for the total community, when the very basic tradition of co-operative action for the total community interest is absent. The institution of the caste Panchayat, which has existed for centuries, rests on the solidarity of the caste group. The assumed solidarity of the village as a whole is non-existent. This may have been a Gandhian myth haunting the early Indian State.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Etienne is driven to demolish the three pillars of Nehru's rural society, the Panchayat, the co-operative and the school, as first priorities in Indian agricultural

development. He does not believe that the lack of general education available to all impedes progress, and he finds even illiterate farmers responsive to developmental urges. His emphasis is on priorities in the 'art of the possible' with limited resources, and in it, production must not only be the first, but the dominant objective.

Official Indian policy has itself made a shift in that direction, but not as far as the author would like to see it go, particularly at the block and district level. Etienne has done a good job in demolishing earlier doctrinaire policies. Their limitations have since been recognised by government itself, though the vested interests set up by Panchayats and parishads and primary schools are hard to do away with in a democratic system. They are the political plums on the cake, and even if the cake cannot grow fast enough, the politicians will find it hard to remove or reduce the plums which they themselves have planted for political advantage.

This leads us to his second thesis, along the road of the 'art of the possible'. He believes that the major solution to these problems lies in the strengthening of the district administration. 'To sum up, the basic idea is to have in each district a man directly responsible for all the principal activities connected with agriculture.' He asks for the shunning of the blind ideological alleys, including the re-opening of the land reforms issue, 'a danger, if not an absurdity', because the further fragmentation of holdings with the pressure of population will not provide for more productive agriculture. He would sooner see a vigorous family planning programme.

Population growth has led to the fragmentation of holdings. In Khandoi, Bulandshahr, 47 holdings in 1916 became 116 in only forty years. For him, the Khandois of India have reached 'the deadline', with 'a reprieve of ten to fifteen years during which they must at all costs improve the yield of their land so that they will be able to live on less than two hectares.'

He asks for pragmatism with resources, even though it may lead to immediate increase in the wealth of the middle and large farmers, hoping a part of it will trickle down as higher wages to the landless and farm labour; but most of all, for better 'discipline' and 'control' at the district and block level. He virtually asks for a new IAS steel frame to be production-oriented in the districts.

But in pursuing the art of the possible, he has left untouched the very real problem of how to bring discipline and strength into district administration, with the forces of Panchayat and Zilla Parishad politics operating as they are around it; and the linked forces of political parties operating at the State and national levels. How can one merely demand an insulation of district officialdom from the political ethos around it, and get discipline and accountability, priority planning and decision

\* Daniel Thorner's *Co-operative: The Pursuit of an Ideal*, and Gerald Berriman's *Hindus of the Himalaya*.

making from this, the lowest level of the administration, when the State and the Centre have other standards and other pressures bearing upon them? Therefore, the problem of strong district administration acting unitedly under a Collector, primarily devoted to agricultural development as the dominant objective, is one which is left in somewhat murky suspension.

Etienne seems to be arguing both ways when he says that, 'Like it or not, it exists (Panchayati Raj), and the clock cannot be put back'; and in the same paragraph he says, 'In the short term, however, our most universal experience shows that it provides neither a solution nor a short-cut towards a faster rate of development.' If Panchayat and parishad are to be accepted as facts of life, how can they be reformed or modified, on the one hand; and how can district officialdom be made to function more purposefully and be more insulated from local political influences, on the other? It is not accidental that the Indian administration has been able to conduct two of the most stupendous administrative tasks in the world, the decennial census and the general elections, when it was constitutionally safeguarded from political influences.

Whilst Etienne does an excellent job of presenting the various strands in the sub-continental complex of Indian agricultural development, and in analysing its major strengths and shortcomings, he leaves us with a sense of disappointment in one of his major criteria, namely to 'find the technical solutions, compatible with existing psychological and sociological conditions.' We would like to be with him when he says, 'Let us not complicate the issues', but the issues are already complicated with twenty years of political commitment to a mixed-up system of government by consensus and influence at the Centre and State levels, and of dominant caste politicians at the district, block and village level.

It is difficult to go with Etienne from this to his 'two firm roots derived from the art of war and political wisdom', namely, the concentration of resources at decisive points, and the practising of the art of the possible. The principles of war, with its assumptions of highly centralised command and the clear military objective of victory can hardly operate in an amorphous political democracy in a pluralistic society like India's. The art of the possible, yes; but what about the concentration of resources in a democratic country of five hundred millions of over three hundred districts in sixteen linguistic States each encouraged by its politicians to clamour for utopia now?

Etienne's book deals primarily with Indian agriculture, but it seems to bring us back again and again to the question which has been lurking in the wings of Indian public opinion ever since Nehru: does Indian political democracy need a modification? Does it need a presidential form of government? Has the grass roots of democracy produced mainly grass for most farmers? The basic questions are

political and sociological, neither economic nor administrative. A book of the 'Art of the Possible' in Indian conditions waits to be written. It will call for a marriage of the kind of studies conducted by F. G. Bailey and Gilbert Etienne. Any takers?

A. D. Moddie

**AGRICULTURE IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY—THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE** By M. L. Dantwala.  
Asia Publishing House, 1966.

**AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA** By S. C. Jain.  
Kitab Mahal, 1967.

M. L. Dantwala's monograph presents a study of the impact of the process of economic growth on the agricultural sector. As an introduction, the author examines the role assigned to the agricultural sector by theoreticians on economic planning and also by the architects of Indian planning.

For analysing the impact of the process of economic growth on the agricultural sector in India, the following factors are taken into account, (a) rate of growth in the agricultural and non-agricultural sector, (b) impact of growth rates on per capita income in the two sectors, and (c) changes in the terms of trade in the agricultural sector.

An examination of the rate of growth of agricultural and non-agricultural production revealed that the degree of divergence between the two has been more than what is normally expected. For instance, while agricultural production increased at the compound rate of about 3.5 per cent during 1951-61, industrial production registered a linear growth rate of 9.7 per cent per year. As the measurement based on two points would be influenced by seasonal condition, both linear and compound rate of growth have been calculated in the case of agricultural production.

National income derived from agriculture (at constant prices) increased by only 31.5 per cent whereas the national income derived from industrial production increased by 49.8 per cent during the period 1948-49 to 1959-62 (average), i.e., 37.8 per cent of the total income in national output during the period was contributed by the agricultural sector and the remaining 62.2 per cent was contributed by the non-agricultural sector.

Given the rate of growth of income from the two sectors, the ratio of income changes would depend on the movement of labour between the two sectors and the change in the terms of trade. A comparison of the working forces in the two sectors indicates that the proportion of the labour force employed in agriculture remained almost the same, viz., 72.13 in 1951 and 71.79 in 1961, over the decade.

The relative movements of the prices of agricultural goods and the non-agricultural goods have been taken as an indication of the terms of trade of the

agricultural sector vis-a-vis the non-agricultural sector. The inadequacy of such information as a clear indicator of the movements in the terms of trade of agricultural and non-agricultural sectors is obvious. If they serve any purpose, it is only as an indication of the direction rather than the magnitude of the change. By and large the movements in the two sets of prices have been on parallel lines. The region-wise analysis of the movements of prices paid and prices received by agriculturists reveals wide variation as between States

The main conclusions emerging from the study are the following:

1. The gross product derived from the agricultural sector increased at the compound rate of 2.7 per cent; the growth-rate in the non-agricultural sector was 3.76 per cent (1948-49 to 1960-61 national income statistics).

2. The proportion of workers engaged in the agricultural sector declined fractionally from 72.13 in 1951 to 71.82 in 1961. Consequently, there was an insignificant increase in the proportion of the work-force engaged in the non-agricultural sector, from 27.87 in 1951 to 28.18 in 1961.

3. The incomes per worker in the two sectors in 1951 were Rupees 431 and Rupees 1,165 respectively. In 1961, they had crept up to Rupees 437 and Rupees 1,297 respectively. As a result, the income parity of the workers in the two sectors declined from 0.37:1 to 0.34:1. It should be mentioned that the paltry rise of only Rupees six in the per-agricultural-worker income is, in some measure, due to the sharp increase in the agricultural work-force, a part of which may be purely definitional.

If the 1961 participation-rate is applied to the 1951 population-data, the work-force in 1951 would be larger and the per-worker income would be smaller (approximately Rs. 392). In that case the increase in the per-worker income in agriculture, during the decade, would amount to Rupees 45.

Based upon the past trends, the author attempts a projection of the future trends which leads to the conclusion that by 1971 the per-worker income ratio in the agricultural and the non-agricultural sector will decline from 0.33:1 in 1961 to 0.30:1 in 1971 and to 0.29:1 in 1975. On the premise that the proportion of labour force in agriculture will remain the same, the work force in the agricultural sector will increase from 135.3 million in 1961 to 170.7 million in 1971 and 191.7 million in 1975.

The policy implication of the study is that the main burden of planning in the next few years is to accelerate the transfer of workers from the agricultural to the industrial sector.

S. C. Jain's book deals with a wide range of problems connected with the agricultural sector in India. The first three chapters of the book are devoted in outlining the role of agriculture in India's

development plan and the need for better utilisation of land. The next 5 chapters deal with land reforms, land holdings, consolidation of land holdings and the different organisational set-up of the agrarian sector.

The problems of mechanisation of agriculture have been dealt with. The problem of marketing agricultural products, stabilisation of agricultural prices and rural credit are discussed in some details.

Much of the material used in this book relates to 1958-59 and in rare figures up to 1962-63, are analysed although the book was published in 1947. The subject coverage being extensive, depth in the treatment of the various aspects is lacking. However, it will be useful to those who wish to have a general idea of the problems of Indian agriculture.

S. K. Verghese

#### **AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN INDIA—A FIELD REPORT** By Daniel Thorner.

Asia Publishing House, 1964.

Between December 1958 and June 1959 Daniel Thorner visited 117 cooperatives of various types distributed throughout the country. He visited only those societies which were considered the best by the local authorities. The book under review is based on the notes jotted down by Daniel Thorner on the characteristics of the cooperatives visited by him.

The book has been divided into two parts. The first part—'Cooperatives in the National Setting'—brings out some salient features in the functioning of cooperatives in India and raises some basic issues. Part two of the book 'Field Notes' reproduces the notes jotted down by him in the course of his visits to various cooperatives.

It was nearly 10 years back that Professor Thorner visited not merely good cooperative societies but also 'the best of the best societies'. The cooperators he met were 'big men in trade, in government contracts, in rice milling, in land-holding and in local politics'. Some of them were 'principal landowners, chief traders, main money lenders, shopkeepers and village officials'. Most of the cooperative societies visited by Thorner were dominated by high castes, rich peasants and money lenders. Lower castes and tenants were excluded from membership. At least in theory, cooperation is supposed to be a method of helping those who are economically weak so that it helps them in uniting against the strong. But, most of the cooperatives visited by the author were in the hands of dominant village families who turned the movement to their advantage.

This is pertinent to an attempt to answer the question, where does the cooperative movement stand now? The right answer to this question should be that even after a decade the cooperative movement remains as static as it had been for a few decades



earlier. Again and again we observe that agricultural cooperatives are dominated by non-agriculturists, big peasants, etc. Though the cooperative credit movement was developed with a view to providing alternative sources of cheap credit, private money lenders continue to provide the bulk of agricultural credit at exorbitant interest rates. To this extent the basic objective of the cooperative credit movement remains a goal yet to be achieved.

In the Intensive Agricultural District Programme Areas (I.A.D.P.) the government has formulated plans for bringing tenants within the cooperative credit structure by advocating crop loans instead of credit against assets. Thorner had stressed the need for a policy decision in this direction. However, the I.A.D.P. experience in respect of agricultural credit has shown that the cooperatives are still laying emphasis on the credit worthiness of the cultivator, viz, the security aspect. As a result the tenants find it difficult to secure credit. Ladjinsky's study on tenurial conditions in the I.A.D.P. districts shows that tenants can get credit only if they are able to get a 'chit' from their landlords. Sharecroppers with oral leases find that cooperative credit is beyond their reach. While credit is linked to farm plans, these tenants are not able to produce any farm plans as they are only oral lease holders without any record to show their rights in land.

Agricultural credit societies will continue to lay emphasis on the credit worthiness of the farmer because a large number of cooperative societies have become defunct owing to their inability to recover loans. Thorner suggests that cooperative societies must be efficient in the recovery of loans. While it is good to run cooperative institutions a little more on commercial lines, one should always remember that cooperative credit institutions were promoted in India mainly for relieving the peasant from the burden of rural indebtedness and for relieving the economically weak peasants from the harassment of private money lenders.

The need for highlighting these objectives is as important today as it was sixty years back since the credit problem of small agriculturists remains unsolved. So long as this situation exists it would be difficult to run cooperatives on commercial lines. In view of this the problem of recovering cooperative loans should not be placed in the forefront.

Thorner suggests that cooperatives should be made the chief agents for distribution of seeds and fertilizers. In this connection it may be mentioned that cooperative institutions have already been given monopoly rights in the distribution of nitrogenous fertilisers as in the case of the distribution of credit; here also cooperatives have proved inefficient.

Thorner's suggestion that enrolling economically weaker families wholesale into the cooperatives before putting their affairs on a better footing is to invite danger that they will drag the societies

down with them" is again not a practical suggestion. This statement contradicts his observation that cooperatives are dominated by rich peasants. After all, the need for cooperative credit has been felt mainly for benefiting those who are economically weak.

Many of the observations made by Thorner regarding cooperative farms are true even today. Most of the cooperative farms are really family farms meant for evading land reforms legislations and for taking advantage of government resources meant for cooperative farms only. One need not agree with him that if cooperative farming has to come it has to be imposed. On the other hand, it is more pertinent to pose the question whether one should still continue to advocate cooperative farming as a substitute to individual farming.

The socio-economic environment existing in the countryside is not at all favourable to promoting cooperative farming as the spirit of cooperation is completely absent. Any number of ordinances issued by the government will not create the cooperative spirit needed for the success of cooperative farms. I don't think it will make much difference to this country's agricultural output if we stop talking about cooperative farms for sometime. Suggestions such as 'curbing the power of village oligarchs' or the government becoming 'a servant of the ordinary people' will not help in promoting cooperative farms if the word cooperation has to make any sense at all.

It goes to the credit of Thorner that he drew our attention a decade back to those problems. Even after ten years the cooperative movement remains where it was. The problems pointed out by him continue to remain in the forefront.

H. Laxminarayan

**REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRICES COMMISSION ON PRICE POLICY FOR KHARIF CEREALS FOR 1967-68 SEASON.**

**REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRICES COMMISSION ON PRICE POLICY FOR RABI FOOD-GRAINS FOR THE 1968-69 SEASON.**

Government of India, 1968.

These reports of the Agricultural Prices Commission have a special significance in that they relate to a year of relative agricultural prosperity following two successive years of drought. New questions have arisen, and some of the old questions also, such as those relating to zonal trade restrictions and minimum support prices, have acquired a new significance in the changed circumstances. The title of the Rabi report is slightly confusing for it relates really to the 1967-68 rabi to be marketed during 1968-69.

The major recommendation that the Commission had made for the 1967-68 crops was that the procure-

ment target for the year should be set at a minimum of eight million tonnes, of which seven million tonnes were to come from the Kharif crop and one million tonnes from the rabi crop. *Prima facie*, this target appeared rather ambitious, for the average annual level of procurement in the recent past had only been about four million tonnes. But the recent past included years of drought, and, the Commission pointed out, the quantum of procurement recommended was only about nine per cent of the output envisaged.

In the case of rice the target of procurement was set at 5.1 million tonnes, which would be almost 13 per cent of the anticipated output, but already under rice the level of procurement had been of the order of eight to 10 per cent of the aggregate national output. Procurement under wheat and coarse grains had been of a very low order and these had to be improved.

Under pulses, procurement had been negligible and the Commission recommended that beginnings should be made with gram procurement. This was to be in addition to the target of eight million tonnes of procurement.

By the time the Rabi report was prepared, it had become obvious that the actual level of procurement would be nowhere near the targeted level recommended by the Commission. It seems to be a major failing of the Rabi report that it enters into no discussion whatever of the causes of the shortfall. Instead, the recommendation is made that in view of this shortfall, the target of procurement for the Rabi crop should be raised from one to two million tonnes.

But this could turn out to be as empty a target as that recommended for the Kharif crop. Perhaps it is being suggested by implication that the shortfall was simply due to lack of political and administrative determination. But even so, a mention should have been made to this effect, if only to indicate that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with the earlier recommendation.

In a year of high agricultural output the requirements for public distribution would be relatively low, and the rationale for a high level of procurement would consist in the need to reduce imports and to build up buffer stocks. The Commission has well emphasised the fact that notwithstanding the technological improvements, Indian agriculture has not yet been placed on a stable footing.

In their report on minimum support prices for the Kharif cereals of 1967-68, they have effectively brought out this fact with the help of a table giving compounded growth rates for a number of crops, shifting the period of estimation progressively from 1949-65 to 1957-67. These rates decline significantly and it is thus indicated that the overall rate of growth since 1949-50 is really dependent, in

a large measure, on the good agricultural performance of the first plan period and during 1964-65.

The case for building up buffer stocks to guard against possible recurrence of deficits is thus emphasised. The Commission has also emphasised the need to reduce imports from the predominant position in the public distribution programme into a marginal category, though they do not consider the possibility of completely dispensing with them as feasible for some more time in view of the rising population and for other reasons. The need for building up buffer stocks is further high-lighted from the need to avoid sudden increases in dependence on imports.

In their Kharif report, the Commission made a strong plea for a direct levy on producers, which was to account for the bulk of the recommended quantum of procurement. The Commission emphasised that the levy was partially in the nature of an impost and justified this by referring to the low burden of taxation that agriculture carried. Accordingly, it was to be graded with regard to the size of holdings and land yields and was to come from surpluses over family and farm requirements.

In 1966-67, procurement prices had been revised in mid-season in many States, in some cases sharply. The levy prices recommended by the Commission for 1967-68 paddy involved lowering of these prices below the level to which they had been raised but still not entirely back to the levels at which they were at the beginning of the 1966-67 season.

Surprisingly, in the Rabi report there is no discussion on questions relating to the system of procurement. Indeed, the earlier principle of the levy being partially in the nature of an impost seems to have been entirely set aside, for in the case of wheat the Commission has expressed itself in favour of procurement prices being set at levels reflecting price trends in the open market. The Commission may be having strong reasons for changing their stand, but these are not indicated in the report. The procurement prices recommended for wheat are lower than those fixed by State governments in the previous year but higher than those that had been recommended by the Commission for that year.

Considering that Indian agriculture is presently passing through a developmental phase, the need for prices being such that they afford the necessary incentive to farmers to continue the process of development is highly important. The Commission has examined this question closely and has given weighty reasons for believing that some fall in agricultural prices would be free from harm.

The high prices of the drought years were abnormal prices, not incentive prices. Terms of trade between agriculture and industry have moved substantially in favour of the former, and while this may have been a healthy development, some reversal in the trend need not be unwelcome.

Industry too is in a phase of development and should not be confronted with too high agricultural prices.

Related to the above question is the question of minimum support prices. Basing itself on cost of production data, the Commission has been regularly making recommendations on such prices also. But these have been essentially of an academic significance. In the developmental context, the likelihood of prices falling so low as to need such support prices has been remote.

Moreover, from the point of view of incentive, the need would be for prices to remain sufficiently high to induce developments and not merely at a level that would adequately cover costs. There seems much substance in the Commission's view that the farmers can take considerable fall in prices from the abnormally high levels of the drought years without loss of incentive. But in the context of successive good harvests it also needs examining what the safe level for such a fall would be and what may be done to ensure that the fall was not larger.

Another ticklish question on which the Commission has been non-committal is regarding the zonal restrictions. In the Kharif report they said that they would take a more definite position on it in the light of the procurement performance during that season. On this basis, the zonal arrangements would seem to have been no success for the procurement during the season was hardly of the order of 4 million tonnes as against the target of 7 million tonnes.

But in the Rabi report, the Commission suggests continuance of the existing arrangements simply on the plea that a change would be unsettling—an argument that appears hardly convincing. The Commission points out that while earlier only some deficit States expressed themselves against the movement restrictions, now with improved harvests even surplus States appeared to be veering round to the idea of relaxation in these restrictions. There seems clearly a need for a thorough re-examination of this question and even for some experimentation in this regard, for *a priori* it seems much can be said on both the sides.

The Commission has been submitting such reports to the government on a regular basis, but detailed appraisals of past performances have been lacking. This makes the reports rather disconnected, and, more importantly, the discussions less grounded in realism than they can possibly be.

Nasim Ansari

**REPORT ON THE HIGH YIELDING VARIETIES PROGRAMME** (Studies in Eight Districts, Kharif 1966-67.) June 1967 Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of India. (Mimeographed).

**EVALUATION STUDY OF THE HIGH YIELDING PROGRAMME (Kharif-1967): First Report.** Programme

Evaluation Organisation, Planning Commission, 1968 (Mimeographed).

The High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP) which is the kingpin of India's new agricultural strategy was introduced in the country during Kharif 1966. With a view to ascertaining the credit requirement of the programme, the All-India Rural Credit Review Committee of the Reserve Bank of India requested the various Agro-economic Research Centres to undertake quick studies in eight selected districts where the programme was introduced on a relatively larger scale. Though the primary objective of the studies was to ascertain the credit requirements for the HYVP the studies covered all aspects of the programme. The present report (the DES report) is largely a consolidated summary of the findings of the eight district reports. (It may be mentioned that similar studies in selected districts were conducted during Kharif 1967 and Rabi 1967, and consolidated reports for the two seasons are expected during 1968.

The DES report appears to have been rather hurriedly drafted and at many points it confuses the actual position. The analysis of different crops and varieties is so mixed up that it gives the impression that the assessment had been made for the same variety for all the districts. Likewise, one fails to understand why a uniform scale of finance has been recommended for different crops with different input requirements. Despite these and other limitations, however, the information contained in the report throws sufficient light on the performance of the HYVP in the first season. The report gave the early warning signal to the authorities concerning the problems which needed urgent solution.

During the first season the HYVP was initiated in most districts on a modest scale and was confined largely to well-to-do, progressive and responsive cultivators who could be expected to bear the heavy expenditure required for, and the risks involved in, cultivating the new varieties. The performance in most districts was, however, poor in all respects. Only in one of the eight selected districts could the area target be achieved. In three districts the achievement was not even one-third of the target.

The position was worse in respect of the application of inputs, especially fertilizers, which is the crucial input for the new varieties. The report reveals that 'the level of use of fertilizers was broadly 50 per cent of the recommended dose and in the case of plant protection measures the adoption was lower still' (p. 81). In such a situation the acreage covered under the HYVP has to be heavily discounted because without the use of recommended inputs the high yielding varieties cease to be so.

Poor performance in the first season was due to several reasons. In some districts targets were set

unduly high and in one district 'targets went through various revisions unrelated to suitability of the area for growing the variety and resources in seed or fertilizers or the preparation of the cultivators for growing TNI' (p. 18). The seeds of the new varieties were priced very high and in addition supplies were either inadequate or untimely. Moreover, in most districts the cooperative institutions failed to arrange timely and adequate supplies of fertilizers and other inputs and the supporting credit to the cultivators. As a result most of the additional funds sanctioned by the Reserve Bank of India for the HYVP remained unutilized. In some districts the funds could not be utilized because of lack of coordination between the cooperative and agricultural departments. Fertilizers could not be lifted for want of credit and *vice versa*. In one district power sprayers remained idle for want of petrol.

The performance of some of the Kharif varieties was also not satisfactory. The output of hybrid maize and Tainan paddy turned out to be not much higher than some local improved varieties. In some districts even TNI paddy did not give satisfactory results. Moreover, all the new varieties, being inferior varieties, fetched less price than in the case of improved local varieties. Thus, on the whole in the first season the HYVP did not show much promise. It may be noted that adverse weather conditions also affected the programme in some districts.

The Plan Evaluation Organisation (PEO) made a study of the HYVP Kharif 1967 in 41 development blocks in different States. In their first report the PEO have given a detailed account of the performance of the HYVP in respect of the planning, organisation of input supplies, extent of adoption of practices by participants and problems of non-participation in the programme. A second report dealing with the crucial questions of output and profitability of the new varieties is expected shortly.

According to the PEO report the Kharif 1967 programme 'was drawn up with desired emphasis, urgency and seriousness at the higher levels of administration in all the States' and 'by and large this sense of urgency and enthusiasm had percolated in a good measure at the lower levels up to the village'. Moreover, the supply position regarding the chemical fertilizers had eased considerably, steps were taken to strengthen cooperative institutions, and more intensive guidance and supervision was visualised at the field level.

Many of the deficiencies pointed out in the DES report on the first season of HYVP continued during the second season. Although the selection of districts and blocks for the HYVP was done more systematically the selection of villages and cultivators was done in a routine way. In many States, past performance of the programme was not taken into

account while fixing targets. Moreover, as in 1966, in many districts the targets were revised frequently and were rigidly hoisted on the lower staff. According to the report 'the exercise of target fixation was carried to ambitious levels and also somewhat arbitrarily done without considerations to factors like irrigation, acceptability of the varieties recommended, seasonality and availability of the crucial inputs such as fertilizers, seed etc.'. It is not clear whether arbitrarily fixed ambitious targets were motivated by a sense of urgency or panic.

As for the supply of inputs the PEO report points out that although bottlenecks in seed supply persisted in some areas, there was no shortage of seeds in most areas. Fertilizer supplies were also adequate in most areas. However, the supply of credit, specially the cooperative credit, continued to be inadequate. Only about one fifth of the sample participant cultivators obtained cooperative loans. In many States cooperative finance for HYVP was not even worked out separately. Thus, the cooperatives again failed to meet the needs of the programme. As a result the available supplies of fertilizers could not be fully utilized by cultivators.

Even in the second year the programme was largely confined to bigger cultivators. The report, therefore, emphasises the need 'to give urgent considerations, whether a selective approach in terms of cultivators could be workable and also whether it would be advisable to discriminate among cultivators of an area in regard to the supply of improved inputs, particularly because of our observation of the widespread knowledge among cultivating these varieties as well as the preferential treatment shown to this programme in such supplies'.

The two reports cover only the Kharif crops and that too for the teething period of the programme. For a clear picture about the prospects of the programme one has to wait for another season. Nevertheless, the two reports clearly indicate the basic problems which have to be tackled urgently if the programme is to succeed. Firstly, some of the new varieties (viz. hybrid maize, Tainan 3 paddy) have not proved successful and will have to be replaced by suitable varieties. Secondly, even the successful varieties have several difficulties which will limit their adoption by cultivators. These are: (a) unsuitability to many areas, (b) high susceptibility to pest diseases and consequent risk involved in cultivation and (c) lower quality grain and consequently lower market price.

Cultivation of the new varieties require heavy expenditure which is beyond the reach of small cultivators. Also, cooperatives in most States are too weak to meet the demand of the programme both in regard to credit and inputs. It is quite evident that these deficiencies cannot be removed in a very short period. Therefore one should not expect quick results from the programme.

R. K. Sharma

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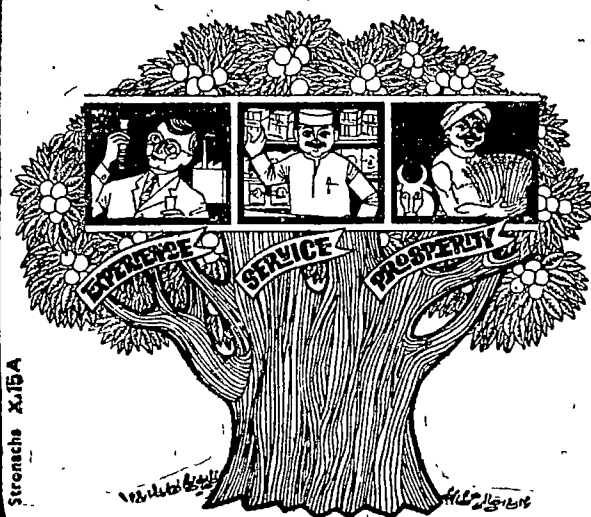
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# Communications

Andre Beteille, in posing the problem of 'Politics and Society' (SEMINAR-107), has paraphrased the view of American writers who have been expressing the same opinions regarding the so called 'non-western political systems' or politics of developing countries. (To name a few, refer to: Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman: *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, 1960; David E. Apter. *The Politics of Modernization*, 1967).

Some Indian intellectuals have mortgaged their thinking and accepted without questioning what the western 'experts' say about us. The sum and substance of the American writers' argument is that modern western political institutions (like representative democracy, elections, political parties, etc.) are operating in India in the context of primitive and narrow loyalties like caste, religion, region and language.

In a recent book, *State Politics in India* by Myron Weiner, the contributors (six Americans, and three Indians with qualification of acceptability to the Americans) have taken great pains to establish the significance of caste as a very important factor in politics by pointing out the caste affiliations of State cabinet ministers, legislators, etc. The editor himself, in pressing the issues, says:

'Caste conflicts exist within almost every State...Caste identifications take many forms...In practice, however, almost all parties, especially Congress, are concerned with applying ethnic arithmetic, that is, with balancing tickets among a variety of castes.'

Thus, under the heavy weight of these evils the 'systems' have already cracked in the continents of Asia and Africa, and the 'system' is cracking in India also. It is only a matter of time when Indians will no longer be able to toy with the democratic institutions; the ultimate breakdown of the system is inevitable because the soil of the

country is unsuitable for such advanced and sophisticated institutions.

Until now, democracy could survive in India because of the existence of 'one dominant party' and the charismatic leadership of Nehru. In the post-Nehru era there would be wars of succession and the assertion of regionalism. Apart from democracy, even the country would disintegrate.<sup>2</sup> The only saviour will be a 'military dictatorship' with the powerful support of American aid.

Thus the model recommended for 'developing societies' is dictatorship. I am surprised why the author of the poser did not take his arguments to this logical end. Why did he leave his American friends in midstream?

I totally agree with Professor A. R. Desai that the starting point of a discussion on 'Politics and Society' has to be on different lines from the one taken in the poser which has confused the issues.

Politics and society in India are facing a conflict between the emerging and the entrenched classes. The bourgeoisie in league with the feudal elements want to make use of democratic institutions for the preservation of its property interests. The Parliament, the State legislatures, the cooperatives and the Panchayati Raj institutions are all monopolised by the vested interests in the country.

The result of this domination has been the concentration of political power in the hands of the economically dominant classes. In rural areas the rich peasantry has foiled all attempts to change land relations. Tenants have no security. The ceiling on land holdings has been sabotaged. The redistribution of surplus land to the poor tiller remains a dream. Due to the absence of agrarian reforms, the liberation of the masses from the exploitation by the landed interests has been arrested. Commenting on the causes of the failure of land reforms in India, K. N. Raj states:

'The landed interests on which the Congress Party depends in the rural areas

1. Myron Weiner, *State Politics in India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968, pp. 50-51.

2. See Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*, Princeton, 1960.

are anxious to freeze the present land relations and take advantage of the facilities offered by the Community Development and agricultural extension services to strengthen their economic and political position in the rural areas. The Party itself pays, therefore, only formal homage on ceremonial occasions to the need for promoting agricultural development and improving the lot of small peasants through land reform'.<sup>3</sup>

In the urban areas, concentration of wealth has increased, the gulf between the rich and the poor is widening, and property interests of the rich are well protected. Thus neither can the privy purse be abolished nor can the banks be nationalised. This is the social context in which Indian politics is operating.

But universal adult franchise has opened new vistas of opportunities for the exploited millions to assert themselves. To defend themselves against the threat of emerging forces, the bourgeois-feudal alliance has created a Constitution where all powers lie with the Centre. This was deliberately done. Instead of controlling all the seventeen State governments, it was easy to control one centre of power under whose control the armed forces and the civil administration of the country function. Further, the class interests of the officers of the armed forces and the higher civil service are the same as those of the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the bourgeoisie have compensated them very well. Thus the coercive authority of the State is securely under the control of the property owners.

In normal times, the property owners are well defended by the Constitution. In abnormal times, the military and civil service will be totally at their disposal. If the people of Kerala or Bengal err in electing Leftists, they can be dealt with. Maneckshaws and Dharam Viras will deal with them. Media of communication like the All India Radio, newspapers and the film industry are fully under the control of the powers that be. Leftist film producers will not get money to produce progressive films. Even if the films are produced, the Censor Board will set them right. All India Radio will broadcast only what is allowed by the Central establishment. Thus to meet the challenge of the emerging classes, the vested interests have fortified themselves.

This is the present situation in our society, and not what the poser has stated. It is

not surprising that the author of the poser has not said anything about the role and influence of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Bankers Association and monied stalwarts like G. D. Birla, Naval Tata and heads of other organized industrial groups. Are they not important members of Indian society? Are they not playing any political role? Then why do they not find a place in the poser? Why this conspiracy of silence?

One more point needs to be considered. The role played by Nehru in the post-independence years was to place before the people what may be called a 'third path'—a path which is neither capitalistic nor socialist. Non-alignment in foreign policy, elimination of statutory landlordism and princely rule with compensation to these feudal elements, providing facilities for economic collaboration between Indian and foreign capitalists even while reserving certain sectors of the economy for development under the public sector, technical and financial assistance from socialist countries, development of co-operative and Panchayati Raj institutions—all these were calculated to create the image of India 'avoiding the pitfalls of exploitative capitalism and totalitarian communism. This general line was expected to overcome the backwardness of the country in the same way as the Socialist countries did through their planning, but maintaining the values of democracy.'

The net result of this third path, which was in reality the capitalist path of economic development, was a series of acute economic crises in the country and increasing dependence on foreign countries. The result is that the 'system' has ceased to be autonomous: a glaring example is 'devaluation' of the Indian Rupee under American pressure, and our vacillating attitude towards American aggression in Vietnam.

With the growth of class consciousness, the class struggle will get intensified. The real trial of Indian democracy will come when the privileges of the ruling class are strongly attacked. With the attack on these privileges, the offensive of the vested interests will intensify, and it remains an open question whether the transition from capitalism to socialism will be a peaceful one in India.

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3. K. N. Raj, *Indian Economic Growth: Performance and Prospects*, Allied Publishers, 1965, p. 12.



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# 111

## THE CENTRE AND THE STATES

a symposium on  
the balance of power  
in our federal polity

symposium participants

### THE PROBLEM

Posed by **Sushil Kumar**, Lecturer  
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and authority on constitutional affairs

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# The problem

THE manifest pattern of Centre-State relations in India is two-fold: one is for normal times, the other is for abnormal emergency situations. The pattern for normal times has three distinct strands: autonomy, cooperation and unity. The pattern for abnormal situations has one distinct strand: Central dominance. In aggregate, the manifest pattern is *sui generis*. It has no prototype to guide it in matters of informal, undefined operational norms. The latent pattern, therefore, grew at the mercy of political environment and exigencies. The dominance of a single party and of a single leader, and their commitment to centralized socio-economic planning, were inevitably its master variables; and, as it evolved, it reflected the shifting balance of forces, not

so much in the country as inside the dominant party. It was more a child of political expediency than an accretion of political wisdom and, as such, was increasingly abstracted from the manifest pattern. Far from becoming a harmonious supplement, it became an inharmonious super-imposition.

The federal equation was thus distorted. The constitutional provisions were bent and stretched to accommodate politically expedient, though otherwise unwarranted, aspects of Centre-State relations. Articles 282 and 356 are a case in point.

Article 282 authorizes inter-State and Centre-State contingency grants. Occasions for

making such grants would be few, it was thought, and the sums involved would be so small as to be innocuous. The reality is just the opposite. An inconsequential provision is now of much consequence; it is a channel for the continuous flow of huge plan grants to the States. These grants masquerade as originally stipulated contingency grants and, for that reason, are subject to no statutory control. These are discretionary grants. Their impact on the federal system is far-reaching. The grants—their amount and release—are settled after a lot of haggling between the State governments, the Planning Commission and the concerned departments of the Central government. In the process, the States barter away their autonomy for funds, and emerge in vertical relationship with the Centre, even in matters within their exclusive legislative competence.

The process is intensified with the passage of years, as, incidental to these grants, the financial liability of the States increases, without a matching increase in their resources. A big part of the grants is given in the form of loans which have to be repaid with interest. And, then, the grants are given for the duration of a plan; thereafter they merge with the committed expenditure of the State governments. The lure of grants thus drives the States into a position where the only answer to their dependence is more dependence.

Article 358 arms the Central government with coercive power as an ultimate sanction of constitutional government in the States. Non-compliance by a State with the Central directives issued to it, is the only prescribed situation for the use of this power; its use in other situations is left to the discretion of the Central government. Experience shows an inconsistent exercise of this discretion in the past, without any tangible reason to account for the variations. The indications of constitutional breakdown in the States have been real, imaginary, and anticipated situations; and similar situations have been assessed differently. The frivolous use of extreme coercive measures by the Centre could have only one effect: it stunted the growth of an autonomous political system in the States.

All the more so because of the Congress organization and the centralized manner of its functioning. The Congress constitution empowers the Working Committee 'to superintend, direct and control all Pradesh Congress Committees and subordinate committees.' The Working Committee made liberal use of this power to influence decisions at the State level, even in such matters as the choice of the chief minister, formation of the ministry, and the relation of the chief minister to his colleagues.

This surely undermined the decorum of parliamentary government in the States.

The unsettling of the federal balance thus had a by-product: subversion of political process in the States. Two results followed.

- (i) The office of the governor was robbed of its legitimate role. Second-rate men were sent to occupy it; in fact, it became a refuge of recalcitrant, discredited and retired politicians. It fell down in esteem and stature. The need to grow out of its angularities and develop proper working conventions, was never felt by it.
- (ii) Federal politics was given a new shape and orientation.

Federal politics shaped itself into an action-reaction pattern, and moved around two poles: the interests of the Congress High Command as one pole, and the competitive interests of different States as the other pole. This can be elaborated.

First, the High Command was interested in the maximization of support for the party, and, because of intra-party feuds, in effecting inter-level factional concord, if possible. In a number of instances, the Central leadership, with a view to keeping everyone happy, did not side with a chief minister in his action against a misbehaving colleague. The Chaliha-Barooah controversy is one such instance. Similarly the Sanjiva-Sanjivayya alliance against Brahmananda Reddy was based on factional interest.

Second, the States sought to assert themselves in mutual competition, which seemed to confirm their separate identities, and also offered a channel for their expression. They competed with one another in bargaining with the Centre. The politics of bargaining was often dramatic and wastefully intense. It passed through moments of agitation and excitement, hope and despair, climax and anti-climax. This is illustrated by the events in Andhra Pradesh, following an informally announced decision of the Central government to locate the fifth steel plant outside the coal belt. The announcement naturally led to much speculation about the selection of site. A steel plant was, after all, a big thing. Its location within a State was of considerable economic advantage to that State and it was a gigantic symbol of status in the comity of sister States. Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Mysore were, therefore, keenly interested in the location of the steel plant, and respectively pressed for the claims of Visakhapatnam, Salem and Hospet.

Andhra Pradesh dramatized its claim. One T. Amrutha Rao went on fast. The people went violent and indulged in arson and loot. The police went amuck, and killed fifteen per-

sons. The chief minister went hither and thither. The Central government got confused, and saying it would not yield to pressure, yielded. The drama ended with a glassful of orange juice personally offered by the Chief Minister to Amrutha Rao to end his fast. All this happened for the construction of a steel plant for which, all knew, there were no funds. Such dramatic eruptions might be intermittent, but bargaining of equal intensity was a regular exercise and its arena was the Planning Commission.

These trends in federal politics suggest a kind of mutually exploitative relationship between the Centre and the States. The growing atomization of political forces and the consequent emergence of region-based politics took these trends further, but, at the same time, inverted the relationship. Political sustenance now moving in the reverse direction—from the States upwards—the bargaining capacity of the States was much greater than before while the Central willingness to enforce unpalatable executive discipline on them was, for political reasons, much less. Politics thus became the chief animating force in Centre-State relations: because of politics, the States could bargain more from the Centre; it was because of politics that they could escape Central control, even defy it.

This was a potentially dangerous situation. Would inter-level political discord minimize the bargaining capacity of the discordant States? Would the Central government look kindly to defiance from such States? These questions posed themselves even before the last general elections and loomed large behind pre-election politics inside the Congress Party. The election results inverted them with urgency. And they are forcing a solution ever since.

The non-Congress governments in different States precipitated the issue. Food shortage, spiralling prices, and slump in the capital market, were some of the features of the situation when these governments came into office. Those who had voted for the change naturally desired an improvement in the situation as a *raison d'être* of the change. The impatience of the new governments to effect improvement was thus great; their impatience of their own limitations in doing this, was greater. These limitations, they knew, were partly physiological, emanating from the pulls and counter-pulls inside the ruling coalitions; partly national, because of an all round economic recession in the country; and partly organizational, because of the distorted working of an unevenly balanced federal set-up.

The organizational limitations were a thorn in the flesh. In the past, they willy-nilly pushed the State governments into subservience

to centrally determined policies and priorities, even in matters pertaining to the field of exclusive State action. This was bad enough even then; but, owing to the mutually exploitative nature of the Centre-State relationship, within the framework of one-party dominance, it was by and large tolerated. The compulsions of competitive party politics could not reconcile with this pattern of federal relationship. The prospect of subservience to the Congress Centre was from the outset a scare to the non-Congress State governments. They could never accept the position of helpless instruments in the perpetuation of the very policies which the other day they went hoarse crying against. This would prove them false to their professions, sap them of their vitality, and nip their hard won electoral successes in the bud.

The federal maladjustment with the politics of the day inevitably led to the mounting of charge against the institutional *bête noire*, and the Centre soon became a target of loud vituperation. For obvious reasons of party politics, a genuine problem of political organization was also given a political colour, through the common device of political-institutional identification. Anti-Congressism of pre-election days was dressed up as anti-Centrism to keep the Congress at bay, as well as to throw a tie around the heterogeneous components of the coalition governments. The Congress Party, seeing a mortal danger, reacted in the only possible way. The Hyderabad decisions bear testimony to this. The federal problem was thus shrouded in the politics of self-preservation through self-aggrandizement.

The fluidity of the political scene in the States, marked by defections and toppling of governments, only intensified party struggle across federal boundaries. The recurring waywardness on the part of legislators and such constitutional officials as the Governor and the Speaker, served the purpose of political excitation; it also diversified the emerging federal problem. Once the dust raised by the most unedifying party competition settles down, the problem should receive the calm consideration it deserves. All should remember that a lasting solution to it cannot be found without first ensuring a rapid rate of economic development, so necessary for generating, in the long run, a feeling of inter-dependence among the different States of the Indian Union.

Change beckons while it threatens. The need of the hour is not to confuse the trivial and the transitory with the permanent, and to see that the manifest threat to the latent pattern of federal relationship is not a latent threat to the manifest constitutional pattern.

SUSHIL KUMAR

# The background

B. SHIVA RAO.

THE concept of a federal structure for India is comparatively of recent origin. The impact on British policy of the revolutionary ideas released by the first world war was one of a sudden shift in political trends.

Unable to withstand the pressure of India's rapidly rising nationalism, the British, who were, until then, committed to a highly centralised system of administration, agreed to a gradual transfer of power, working in stages towards a system of responsible government in an undefined future.

Other forces besides Mahatma Gandhi were at work. India was made, at the end of the first world war, a member of the League of Nations with two representatives, one nominated on behalf of the British-ruled provinces and the other for the princely States. Thus began the process—unconsciously at first—of welding into a single political entity two divisions of India which Imperial Britain's policy of conquest and annexation had produced over a century and more: spreading over it, but as a

distant ideal, was the concept of a federation.

This process gathered unexpected momentum in the decade following the end of the war. The democratic spirit, which had struck roots in the British-ruled provinces, extended its influence into the princely States. The demand for popular reforms and citizenship rights voiced by India's leaders caught the imagination of the people of the princely States. On the other hand was Britain's claim that as the Paramount Power, she had the exclusive right to interpret treaties and agreements entered into in previous decades with the rulers of the States.

Caught between these two forces—a vigorous Indian nationalism and an assertive Imperial policy—some of the princely rulers leaned with favour towards a single federal Government of India embracing provinces and States. In this formative stage they were encouraged by the special privileges which the British Government offered them in the Constitution that came into operation in 1935. Its main features were complete autonomy for the provinces and a federal

administration at the Centre to commence operation on the fulfilment of certain conditions favourable to the princely States.

The outbreak of the second world war in 1939 resulted in the federal part of the Constitution being kept in abeyance. Britain, perilously hard-pressed in the early stages of the war, agreed in 1942 to India drawing up her own Constitution through an elected Constituent Assembly, whether as a member of the British Commonwealth or with complete independence, according to her free choice. One stipulation qualified the offer: namely, that such a Constitution would not be imposed on regions unwilling to accept its provisions. This reservation was designed to give a sense of security to the Muslims and other minorities.

#### Partition Demand

By the end of the war, the demand of the Muslim League for the partition of India into two sovereign States, India and Pakistan, had become too powerful to be ignored. In vain did the British Labour Government point out at first that such partition was neither practicable nor wise; that weighty administrative, financial and strategic reasons stood out against the proposal; and that other and less drastic expedients could be forged to safeguard minority interests—such as a federal Centre with a minimum of jurisdiction over three or four essential subjects and justiciable fundamental rights for the citizens—without resort to division.

This line of argument came too late. In the period following the end of the second world war, with Britain's strength and influence visibly on the decline, a quick solution of the problem of India's freedom appeared to be necessary if the Indian sub-continent was to continue as a going concern—a single entity preferably, but divided into India and Pakistan if necessary.

Nehru and most of his colleagues—with the significant exception of Gandhiji—reconciled themselves to division in the hope that a period of separation might

create at a later stage a desire for a reunion. Meanwhile, the baffling problems which were a legacy of the world war clamoured for bold solutions. India, divided but free, decided in favour of a strong federal Centre capable of handling her economic and social problems on a national, not a regional basis.

The first article of our Constitution describing India as a Union of States unmistakably reflected this sentiment. On behalf of the Drafting Committee, Dr. Ambedkar, its Chairman, explained that the Committee,

'Wanted to make it clear that though India was a federation, the federation was not the result of an agreement by the States to join a federation... and no State has the right to secede from it. The country is one integral whole, its people a single people living under a single imperium derived from a single source.'

The Union Powers Committee, reporting on the eve of partition and reacting to that factor, set out its conclusion thus—'The soundest framework of our Constitution is a federation with a strong Centre.'

The Committee also recommended that to enable the States to cede wider power to the Centre if they so thought fit, the Constitution should empower the federal government to exercise authority within the federation on matters referred to them by one or more units.

This brief historical background is of special interest in the context of developments in Centre-States relationships during the eighteen years that our Constitution has been in operation.

#### Three Provisions

The normal relations between the Centre and the States are governed under our Constitution by three sets of provisions under specified heads:

- (1) Legislative—Articles 245 to 255 and the Seventh Schedule,
  - (2) Administrative—Articles 256 to 263 including those relating to the settlement of inter-State disputes,
  - (3) Financial—Articles 264 to 293.
- To these may also be added a

fourth, namely, inter-State trade and commerce (Articles 301 to 305 and 307).

Article 248 gives exclusive power to Parliament to make any law with respect to any matter not included either in the Concurrent or in the State List; but in an emergency Parliament may legislate on any matter even in the State List (Article 250).

In the sphere of administrative relations, the Constitution lays down that the executive power of every State should be so exercised as to ensure compliance with the laws made by Parliament. On the other hand, the executive power of every State should be so exercised as not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union. Power is also vested in the President to entrust, with the consent of the government of a State, either conditionally or unconditionally, to that government or to its officers, functions in relation to any matter to which the executive power of the Union extends (article 258).

#### Financial Allocations

The financial powers of the Centre and the States are co-extensive with the legislative powers. The Constitution has deliberately provided for a scheme of interdependence between the Union and the State governments. The sole responsibility for the defence of the country and for the maintenance of its economic stability devolves upon the Centre. For its proper discharge have been assigned to the Centre the relatively more elastic sources of revenue, such as taxes on income (other than agricultural income), corporation tax, customs duties and excises except on alcoholic liquors and narcotics to the Union Government.

In order to remove a possible imbalance created by such allocation of the more elastic sources of revenue to the Centre, the Constitution has provided for the sharing of taxes between the Union and the States. With that objective in view, the Constitution contemplates the appointment of an independent Finance Commis-

sion at suitable intervals of time. Article 282 enables the Centre to make substantial grants to the States as assistance for developmental plans. These grants are, of course, discretionary.

Taken as a whole, the shareable taxes and the compulsory transfer in accordance with the award of the Finance Commission, the discretionary grants under article 282 of the Constitution and, finally, loans of varying amounts from time to time, cover the spectrum of financial relationship between the Centre and the States.

There is some force in the contention that the Constitution-makers did not intend the power under this article (282) to be utilised in the manner in which it is being done.

P. V. Rajamannar, who was the Chairman of the Finance Commission set up in 1964, commented 'Article 282 contemplates a grant for a public purpose. I doubt if grants under article 282 can be made without such grants being tied to a specific public purpose... It is clear to my mind that article 282 was not intended to enable the Union to make a grant to a State as such.'

#### State Resources

The growing pressure on the resources of the State governments consequent on the expanding needs of their developmental plans, the non-plan requirements such as the emoluments of employees, food subsidies, interest charges, debt repayments, etc., have resulted in a situation in which the fiscal autonomy of the States is being seriously eroded. Basically, the position under the Constitution should be one in which the Centre and the States are partners in a financial relationship in which the fruits of common endeavour are shared.

This problem came up before the National Development Council at a recent meeting but seems to have yielded no positive results. The main issues were whether (1) Central assistance to individual States should be determined for the plan period as a whole or only from year to year; (2) what should be

the principles governing the distribution of annual plan assistance; (3) should border States like Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and Nagaland receive special consideration; (4) is population a relevant factor in determining Central assistance (5) should weightage be given to certain factors in deciding the quantum of Central assistance to the States, such as (a) economic backwardness of a State, (b) commitment on account of continuing schemes, (c) potential for raising resources and performance of States in mobilising them, (d) Central sector investments and (e) quantum of assistance given to each State in the last eighteen years.

The meeting of this Council held in May 1968 considered the 'Approach to the Fourth Five Year Plan'. It authorised the Planning Commission to go ahead with the preparation of the draft of the Fourth Plan broadly on the lines indicated in the 'Approach' paper. The Council also constituted a Committee of Chief Ministers to consider Central assistance to States and centrally sponsored schemes.

#### Central Domination

Allegations about the Centre's domination over the States in the matter of grants and other financial assistance, the arbitrary location of heavy industries in particular areas leading to regional imbalances are some of the main complaints heard with increasing vigour today. These complaints have become more frequent after the last general elections which resulted in the installation of non-Congress governments in some States.

E.M.S. Namboodiripad (Kerala's Chief Minister) complained that 'the Planning Commission's view seems to preclude the possibility of any change in policy relating to the allocation of Central sector investments in industry in less developed regions specifically meant for quickening the pace of industrial development of these regions.'

There is a wide variation among the States in the prices and avail-

ability of food articles. No success has so far been achieved in formulating a national, integrated food policy. In regard to the location of centrally sponsored industries, there is a charge of similar discrimination against some States. The Chief Minister of Madras, C. N. Annadurai, appears recently to have obtained certain assurances from Japanese collaborators. The machinery of the Planning Commission and the National Development Council, through which most of the developmental programmes in the States are processed, have clearly not proved adequate for the current needs of the States.

#### British Example

The National Economic Development Council, set up in Britain in 1962 with wide terms of reference may be of useful guidance to us in India. This body, which has a staff of its own, includes Ministers, representatives of the Trades Union Congress, some outstanding men chosen from the management side of industry, both public and private, and two distinguished independent members. The main task of the Council has been to consider steps for achieving a fast and continuing rate of economic growth. Its terms of reference were defined in the following passage:

'To examine the economic performance of the nation with particular concern for plans for the future in both the private and the public sectors of industry; to consider together what are the obstacles to quicken growth, what can be done to improve efficiency, and whether the best use is being made of our resources; and to seek agreement upon ways of improving economic performance, competitive power and efficiency; in other words, to increase the rate of sound growth. The whole emphasis is on the importance of achieving a faster but soundly-based rate of economic expansion'

Article 249 of our Constitution confers on Parliament power to legislate on a matter in the State

List in the national interest. So far this power has been exercised only once since 1952.

### River Disputes

In regard to inter-State river disputes, though there has been on the Statute Book since 1956 the Inter-State Disputes Act to provide for the adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers and river valleys, it does not appear that the provisions of this Act have been seriously implemented or effectively used. How far the present political leadership in the different States understands the spirit of 'good neighbourliness and accommodation' still remains a question mark on vital issues of national development and national well-being.

The States Re-organisation Act of 1956 established five zonal Councils. Each of these Councils was to function as an advisory body for the discussion of any matter in which some or all of the States represented in the Council or the Union and one or more of the States represented in the Council have a common interest.

Provision was also made in the Act for joint meetings of the Zonal Councils to discuss matters of common interest. Judging from the bitter quarrels witnessed from time to time over border disputes based on language or otherwise, it is difficult to assert with any confidence that these Zonal Councils have served the purpose for which they were set up.

Again, no serious thought seems to have been bestowed on the advisability of setting up inter-State Councils under Article 263 of the Constitution. This provision was specifically incorporated in the Constitution so that, on matters of common interest among the States or on matters over which disputes may have arisen between States, a better coordination of policy and action may be achieved.

Another problem closely connected with Centre-State relationships concerns the administration

of a State in the event of a constitutional break-down. The scheme of Article 356 of the Constitution under which the President takes over the administration of a State by issuing a Proclamation is that the Centre assumes the entire responsibility for the administration of that State while the Proclamation is in force. Responsible government in the State is replaced by responsible government at the Centre. One of the consequences of such a take-over is that the powers of the legislature of the State would be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament.

### Advice to President

There is provision also for a Consultative Committee to advise the President in the matter of making such laws. This Consultative Committee has only a limited function. The laws so made by the President are to be laid before Parliament and are liable to modification by Parliament. Although the Governor acts as the agent of the President, it is well-known that many of the Governors do not have the necessary administrative background or experience. Some suitable machinery has to be devised at the Central level to see that the State administrations are carried on effectively and the democratic processes do not suffer in any way during President's rule in a State. One of the methods may be to clothe the Consultative Committees with wider powers than they now enjoy.

At the conclusion of the recent meetings of the National Development Council, there was a conference of Chief Ministers specially convened by the Union Home Minister to discuss communal disturbances in the country and the measures necessary to prevent their recurrence. The Madras Chief Minister, Annadurai, seems to have raised at this conference the emergence of a new and serious threat to national integrity which is spreading in different parts of the country, namely, the existence in some of the States of 'senas' in different forms which were promoting hatred towards particular communities and inter-

ests. The Union Home Ministry's proposal to revive the National Integration Council to devise measures for checking the growth of divisive forces in the country may be a welcome move.

For the first fifteen years and more of our independence, two factors kept centrifugal forces in the background: Jawaharlal Nehru's towering personality which exercised an influence far beyond his party and the phenomenal success of the Congress in the first three general elections resulting in the party assuming power at the Centre and virtually in all the States. The picture has greatly altered since the last general elections in 1967. Not surprisingly, the tilting of the balance in favour of parties other than the Congress in some States has brought to the fore problems which were not foreseen at the time of the framing of the Constitution. Economic and social problems, which are directly more the concern of the States than of the Centre, must take precedence in the programmes of the different parties over all other considerations.

### Emphasis on Integration

India is entering a more difficult period demanding a far greater measure of the spirit of give-and-take than was called for until the 1967 elections. In an assessment of Centre-State relations, it is wise to remember Dr. Ambedkar's words: 'Though the country and the people may be divided into different States for convenience of administration, the country is one integral whole.'

It would be statesmanlike, however, of the Central Government to remember that such a sentiment to be effective should be strengthened by more material considerations. A meaningful phrase from the U.N. Charter comes to my mind: 'equitable geographical distribution.' It should be in ample evidence in the choice of personnel for key positions including the Central Cabinet, in the Planning Commission's schemes and, in fact, in every sphere of governmental activity.



# Financial implications

C. D. DESHMUKH

ANY review of the course of relations between the Centre on the one hand and the States, on the other, during the last two decades, especially under the constitution promulgated within three years of the advent of independence in India, is likely to be erroneous if it ignores the basic fact that the Indian Constitution is not, and was never intended to be, anything even broadly resembling a federation. A true federation is essentially one in which the federating units come together to form a federation by virtue of a com-

pact and agree to surrender specified sovereign powers to the union they wish to form.

The Republic of India has two categories of federating units, viz., the former provinces and the erstwhile princely States. The political status of the former was gradually raised by the British Parliament as a result of the successive, somewhat reluctantly taken, steps to grant self-government, short of complete independence, to India between 1909 and 1935. The bitter pill of tardy self-rule was sought to be sweetened

by the grant of larger autonomy to the provinces, and since the bulk of the process took place while India was still undivided, checks and balances were not forgotten: the creation of a separate province of Orissa, with a Hindu majority, e.g., to balance the separation of Sind, largely Muslim, from the old province of Bombay.

### Legislative Schedule

In regard to the schedules of legislative powers, the Constitution by and large followed the Government of India Act, 1935, under which the provinces were, in essence only partially and imperfectly, autonomous units of a unified administration, with their powers defined as a matter of administrative convenience. The old British India, bereft of the portion that formed Pakistan after partition, was one political unit in essence. To this were added the old princely States that had elected to accede to the Union, while theoretically free to continue each one as a sovereign State on the withdrawal of the paramount power, the British Crown. Here certainly there was the formal reality of a federation by compact. But paramountcy had over the century of British power deprived the princely States of any true sovereignty and its well known stigmata, the power to decide between war and peace or to conduct foreign relations. The Union of India was therefore essentially made up of the old administrative units or of a very large number of puppet States with a legal facade of sovereignty, which became operative on the withdrawal of the Crown's paramountcy that had bolstered it up.

While the makers of the Constitution were most of the time oblivious to the non-sovereign nature of the States, they also failed to realise that by virtue of the political frame-work of the Constitution and consequential election arrangements, whilst administratively India was retained as a Union, with an apparently strong Centre as political doctrine required, the true centre of political gravity would inevitably remain

in the States. It is possible that had this been realised earlier substantially different electoral arrangements would have been made so as to ensure that the periodical normal elections to the legislatures of States would take place at a safe distance from elections to the Union Parliament, so as to temper the power and influence of the local party bosses on the elections to the Parliament. As things stand, no one—not even the present or potential Prime Minister—can succeed in getting elected to Parliament without strong backing from the State party bosses.

This true distribution of the centre of power was overlooked in the early years because of the personal prestige and all-India influence of the heroic figures who had over three decades wrested independence from the British after toil and tears, if not blood. The charismatic influence of Jawaharlal Nehru, in particular, stifled all deviationism although, occasionally, well-entrenched local leaders got away with deviation, especially if it was indulged in tactfully and almost furtively. But as the glamorous figures of the pre-independence era have in the course of nature, left the stage, the new local bosses have more and more manifestly made their political influence felt and succeeded in getting their way in important matters. In this they have been assisted by adult franchise, wielded by a largely illiterate and ill-informed electorate.

### Legislator's Stature

The rural franchise-holder, accounting for over three-fourths of the voting power, has narrow horizons and parochial interests and is no judge of the political calibre of his elected representative from the national, much less the international, point of view. As a result, over the successive elections, while his confidence and self-assurance have mounted, the quality and calibre of his representatives to the local and national legislature have fallen, and there is a persistent political pressure to exalt the parochial over the State interest and the States over the nation's interest. Simultaneously, the capacity for good and efficient government

has fallen, both in the political decision-makers and in the members of the bureaucracy; administration as an art is almost becoming extinct.

Viewed primarily, as it must be, from the point of view of devolution and delegation for historical and conceptual reasons, the development of democracy in India of the western parliamentary type has suffered from (1) obliviousness to the essentially administrative origin of the powers of the States; (2) tardy realisation of the political power of local groups and (3) over-endowment of the Union with powers to raise fiscal resources.

### Loss of Efficiency

There was no warranty for imagining that the States, with a steadily falling calibre of policy making personnel would be able to handle, on a local basis, problems of an essentially national character, e.g., education or family planning. There was even less justification for a doctrinaire decentralisation aimed at 'developing democracy at the grass roots' and placing on weak inexperienced shoulders heavy burdens of the tasks of economic development, especially in the midst of a plan period as was done in regard to the Panchayati Raj.

There is now an almost unanimous recognition of the uninterrupted loss of administrative efficiency in India. But few realised in the beginning that with the democratic system installed in India this was inelectable. Had it been realised that there would be, for years to come, paucity of capable political leaders, the scheme would have provided for less devolution and greater built-in restraints on proliferation of ministries.

As a matter of fact, however, the system as evolved has proved to be increasingly defenceless against being overwhelmed by the politically angled running of governments, involving as it does unprincipled struggles for capturing or retaining political power. Congress, installed by history as the

ruling party, ignored the advice of the Father of the Nation for equipping itself with a modicum of principles and has displayed itself more and more starkly as a power grabbing machine, with no vestiges of any sense of service. Now that as a result of progressively inefficient rule it has been pulled down from the pedestals of power in many States the principal preoccupation of the Centre seems to be one of how to recapture power through the political machine. No holds are barred in this game, except when the birds come home to roost as in the case of defections or collecting contributions from companies for elections.

A review of Centre-State relations, say, five years ago, would have been far less revealing than it is today after the all-India sway of Congress as a ruling party has been broken. Nevertheless, with the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru, the coming events had already begun to cast their shadows before them. The maximum misperception of the basic issues took place during his life-time, as all or most of these were settled out of the constitutional arena, through the party organisation. That is no longer possible now and the real issues have to be faced fairly and squarely.

#### Conspicuous Facts

The conspicuous facts observed about Centre-States relations in India are mainly four. (1) The plan expenditure of the States and even a fraction of their non-plan expenditure has been financed by the Centre through grants or loans. The States even 'rifled' the treasury by unauthorised overdrafts through the currency chests entrusted to them for lack of regular commercial banking facilities. (2) The States have deliberately dragged their feet over taxing the larger agricultural incomes, while at the same time retarding the reform of land-tenures and the breaking up of large agricultural holdings; in one State some reforms carried out by a predecessor government were even reversed. (3) In the matter of control of movements of food,

the procurement or levy, the formation or retention of zones, the States have consistently set the Centre at nought and imposed their own terms. (4) The successive plans have been swelled to beyond rationally sustainable limits owing to pressure by the States as the result of the centre of political gravity resting in the States. This, added to indifferent performance for many years in the matter of promoting agricultural production, obstinacy in regard to food distribution and the general ineffectual management of family-planning could be regarded as the prime factors in the economic mismanagement which has plagued the country for the last two decades or so.

#### Urgent Revision

The strange but only apparent antithesis of financial dependence and political supremacy of the States *vis-a-vis* the Centre that has been in evidence calls most urgently for a revision of the financial arrangements hitherto prevalent, so as to place real responsibility where it lies. For this purpose the Constitution requires to be amended.

It is very doubtful if the financial implications of a developing society were realised when the Constitution was made. It is clear now in retrospect that ampler resources should have been placed at the disposal of the States instead of making them so dependent on grants and loans from the Centre—grants and loans which they seem to be able to extract from the Centre under irresistible political pressure while for the purposes of achieving balanced regional development it is very necessary that the Centre retain a distributable pool of resources.

At the time of writing (middle of May 1968) the daily press carries reports in regard to the States' attitude to resources for the annual plan, stated to be a source of worry to the Planning Commission, which are relevant to the present context. According to these reports the finalisation of the annual plan for 1968-69 has been hampered by persisting discrepancies between the

budgetary resources and the plan outlays of several States, including Maharashtra, Madras, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The Planning Commission has found that several States had either over-estimated their plan resources or left uncovered resources-gaps to bid for bigger annual plans. There is also, the reports say, a clamour among the States for a bigger share in the additional Central assistance of Rs. 25 crores earmarked for major and medium irrigation works. Andhra Pradesh, for instance, wants the Centre to finance the Nagarjunasagar project on a 100 per cent basis.

The Commission has already allocated Rs. 590 crores of Central assistance to the States for their current year's plans. With the additional Rs. 20 crores earmarked for the irrigation projects, total Central assistance to the States this year would come to Rs. 615 crores against Rs. 590 crores last year. The States are expected to provide Rs. 400 crores on their own (against Rs. 440 last year) so as to bring the total outlay on State Plans to Rs. 1,100 crores; but although this has been provided for in the State budgets, scrutiny by the Planning Commission reveals that these additional resources are over-estimated. Meanwhile, the budgetary allocation for the Central plan for the current year stands at Rs. 1,162 crores and that for the Union Territories' plans at Rs. 65 crores.

#### States' Capacity

The uncertainty about the States' capacity and willingness to raise additional resources revolves round the consolidation of the gains from the recent revival in agricultural production. This sector of the national income, it can be demonstrated without great difficulty, contributed much less than its expected share for financing national development. This is so both because of the historical irrationality of the system of land tenure inherited from the British regime remaining largely unrectified as also because of political resistance to any thought of rectification. The recent abolition of land revenue

from the small man has a great deal in its favour, but fiscally the measure only led to revenue losses while good taxation theory required recompense for losses in the shape of sharply progressive levies from the bigger farmers. This last has been studiously avoided by the States out of political timidity. Despite abolition of land revenue collected from the smaller farmer, total land revenue collections can be raised by 200 to 300 per cent by the introduction of an agricultural income tax, matching in its progression the present income tax levied on the non-agricultural incomes.

It is only fair to mention in this context that the failure to tax adequately does not relate entirely to the agricultural incomes. There is also failure to tax the unearned increments in income and capital in land-values in developing urban centres. The Planning Commission has drawn attention to the importance of devising means to mop up these unearned incomes, especially as a way of reducing glaring disparities in income. The Commission also calls for a definite policy hitherto not in evidence in regard to controlling the emoluments of some categories of high business executives. (This failure can partly at any rate be laid at the doors of the Centre and not the States and is the reflection of the political dependence of the ruling party on contributions from big business for its electoral campaigns).

#### Correcting the Imbalances

Whilst the imbalance between plan aspirations and resource raising would, in part, be corrected by the States being encouraged to muster sufficient courage to raise far more massive resources from the land tax and from the unearned increments in urban land values, the bulk of it calls for an amendment of the relevant articles of the Constitution so as to vest in the States more adequate sources of finance to match their developmental aspiration. Responsibility for development, and the power to discharge it, would then be better matched and recourse to article 280 for grants from the Centre

would be rendered largely unnecessary, thus enabling the Centre to reserve their use to the more justifiable cases of contingent assistance.

#### The Method

It would be necessary at the same time to ensure that the Centre's capacity to assist States with grants under article 275 of the Constitution is not diminished. The use of this article has never been questioned as an attempted invasion on the autonomy of the States. Historically, the decision in each case is based on the recommendations of the Finance Commission. Moreover, as the Planning Commission is reported to have pointed out, a major emphasis is called for in the overall national interest, on the removal of imbalances in development by means of a purposeful dispersal of the development effort. This would indeed be a pre-condition of the achievement of distributive justice in the democratic welfare State aimed at in the Constitution. In the basic document of the fourth plan, according to press reports, the Commission observes that while in the affluent countries, development could be spread more evenly and its distribution to the poorer sections of the community ensured in part through fiscal, price and other policies, no significant result can be achieved through such measures in a poor country (such as India). Therefore the only effective course of action for India was to see that development took place everywhere.

Along with the above, if Article 275 is found to be inappropriate, it would be justifiable to use article 280 in addition to the proper deployment of loans.

Along with the above, if Article 275 is found to be inappropriate, it furnished abundant proof that the provision of apparently sufficient finance carries no guarantee of the attainment of the physical targets aimed at. The blame for this patent failure can justly be ascribed both to the Centre on one hand and the States on the other. Political leaders of the States have

consistently formulated over-ambitious plans—often prestigious in character—and have usually succeeded in brow-beating the Planning Commission and the Central Government into accepting them. The Centre, finding real resources lacking either from within the nation or outside, via external assistance has taken uninhibited recourse to deficit finance. The payment of the economic price for this rake's progress could not be avoided in the shape of cost-inflation and devaluation.

#### Lack of Judgment

To the extent to which there was lack of judgement in the Indian Great Leap Forward nothing was thus gained and much lost. The price-level has been distorted and rosy prospects of employment held out to budding technologists have proved to be a mirage. India has fallen short of the advance aimed at, and has landed at a lower level which could have been reached without bruising, had it been judged possible to follow a more realistic developmental course. An imperfectly conceived Centre-States relationship must be held to be mainly responsible for this result—the conceptual defects of the frame-work have been aggravated by the facts of political life and by their growing but unfavourable impact on the capacity, motivation, industry and integrity of the administrative apparatus.

While in the political setting of India, the state of the administration is bound to deteriorate quicker in the States than in the Centre and to respond more tardily to ameliorative measures, the onus of setting a good example or of devising institutional reforms lies heavily on the Centre. Any failure on its part to discharge this responsibility, especially threatened now by the weakening or disappearance of national or indirect party rule could have serious consequences for the nation's development, integrity and security. The essentially functional character of the Union of India can be lost sight of only at the peril of India's existence as a nation.

# Future possibilities

MOHAN RAM

THE problem of Centre-State relations in India is basically one of the developing conflict between two opposite trends. One is the drive for a strong unitary State, spearheaded by the Jana Sangh, aimed at the hegemony of the Hindi-speaking heartland over the relatively advanced non-Hindi peoples of the coastland. Another is the demand for a minimal Centre and the greatest measure of autonomy for the States. An extreme image of this trend is the once-secessionist DMK movement in Madras which provides an alternative focus to the Jana Sangh's drive.

There is no political party in the non-Hindi coastland which sup-

ports the Jana Sangh's demand for a unitary India just as there is no secessionist or separatist party in the Hindi midland comparable to the DMK in Madras. The Jana Sangh-DMK syndrome sums up the conflict between the supra-nationalism of the Hindi midland which fancies itself the Prussia of India and the strong undercurrents of sub-nationalism among the various non-Hindi peoples outside the midland.

The Jana Sangh's demand for converting the present quasi-federal set-up into a unitary one is perverse amidst the demand from coastal States like Madras and Kerala for the fullest measure

of State autonomy and amidst the secessionist demands of the ethnic minorities like the Nagas and Mizos. The Jana Sangh's demand aims at more than fore-closing any change in the present Centre-State equation in favour of the States. The present equation is undoubtedly weighted in favour of the Centre and therefore makes for the domination of the populous Hindi belt, and more particularly Uttar Pradesh, by virtue of the weightage it gets through its sheer numbers.

### The Shift

The Congress stream of the freedom movement, dominated as it was by the Hindi and pro-Hindi leadership, was reconciled to a federal set-up with a minimal Centre for a free India because there were the problems of the Muslim minority and the princely States. A federal set-up was to be Hindu communalism's concession to the Muslim minority in return for not pressing the Pakistan demand. It was also the midland's bait to the princely States outside its fold. But when the Congress found that it could not secure the Muslim League's co-operation in framing the Constitution, the commitment to the federal set-up was given up. The shift towards a 'strong Centre' began.

The Objectives Resolution in the Constituent Assembly moved by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946 reflected the hope that the League would co-operate in drawing up the Constitution with a readiness even to concede the residuary powers to the States. The first report of the Union Powers Committee paid a formal homage to the concept of a minimal Centre. But by the time it submitted its second report, its thinking had changed. New virtues were discovered for the proposed monolithic set-up: 'Now that Partition is a settled fact, we are unanimously of the view that it would be injurious to the interests of the country to provide for a weak Central authority which would be incapable of ensuring peace, of co-ordinating vital mat-

ters of common concern and of speaking effectively for the whole country in the international sphere.'

H. V. Pataskar narrates the subsequent developments: 'at the time of the second reading we developed a fear complex. The autonomy of the States or their semi-autonomy came to be looked upon as a matter of national danger. We kept the form of federation but we changed the substance or the context of the federation.'

Under the Constitution, federalism is a parody. In the first place, unlike the American federation, India is not an 'indissoluble union' of 'indestructible States' but a permanent, involuntary union of States which exist on the sufferance of the Centre. In the United States, Switzerland, Australia and even the USSR, the boundaries of the States cannot be altered unilaterally. But under the Indian Constitution, the States may be combined or split up and their boundaries altered at the will of Parliament, and the State legislature entitled merely to 'expressing its views within such time as may be granted by the President'.

### Sharing of Powers

As for sharing of powers, both the Centre and the States may make laws on subjects in the third (Concurrent) List but the Central law will prevail over the State law in the event of a conflict. But even this is qualified by the sweeping powers the Centre has for itself under Article 249 under which the Rajya Sabha, through a two-thirds majority resolution, can authorise Parliament to legislate on any matter enumerated in the State List 'in the national interest.' Again, Article 200 empowers the Governor of a State to reserve for the President's consideration a bill passed by the legislature. Unlike in the United States Constitution, the residuary powers vest with the Centre and not with the States.

The Centre's main instrument of power against the State is the

office of the Governor. All the three types of emergencies the Constitution provides for (under Articles 352, 365 and 360) are handled through the Governor. A proclamation of emergency under Article 352 can empower Parliament to make laws normally under the exclusive jurisdiction of the States. Under Article 354, the President can also assume the financial powers of the State during a state of emergency. Under Article 356, the Centre, subject to endorsement by Parliament, can dismiss a State ministry and dissolve the State legislature.

At least theoretically, the federal division of powers can be abrogated in relation to every one of the States and the limited federalism that obtains in normal circumstances can be converted into a unitary set-up in the name of an emergency. The States would cease to be component units of a federal union and become parts of a decentralized unitary State or mere administrative zones of a unitary State. In sum, the Constitution expects the citizen to owe his residual loyalty to the Centre and not to the State. In a sense this is a corollary to the arrangement which vests residual powers with the Centre and not with the States.

With its monstrous perversion of the federal principle, the Constitution has a vast Centre-State conflict potential built into it. The Constitution assumes that India is a monolith. It therefore lacks the resilience needed to meet the challenge of the coming conflicts. The conflicts could arise either from a revolt of the infra-structure in the form of strong sub-national movements or from an ideological conflict between, say, leftist States and a rightist Centre, which for all purposes would be a conflict between two sets of States.

### Peripheral Differences

So far the conflict has been obviated by the essential distortions in the situation. The issues of Centre-State conflict have been peripheral so far—allocation of

development funds, sharing of revenues, sharing of river waters, demarcation of inter-State boundaries, deployment of Central Reserve Police in the States and the like. There have of course been those vague demands for State autonomy from the DMK Chief Minister of Madras and the Left Communist Chief Minister of Kerala. But these have been mere political slogans to cover up the failures of the respective State governments or aimed at securing some political manoeuvrability with the Centre.

As a rule, the non-Congress ministries since 1967 have been populist in their approach to issues and no Chief Minister has so far seriously challenged, for instance, the Centre's interpretation of the Governor's powers. All that the Chief Ministers wanted in this context was that they be consulted on the appointment of Governors. Thus, by implication, the non-Congress Chief Ministers have accepted everything else about the powers of the Governor and the new interpretation of these powers.

#### Antagonistic Possibilities

It would not be correct to say that the end of Congress control of some of the States has thrown up the problem of Centre-State relations. When Congress ruled all the States, the Centre-State conflicts were non-antagonistic contradictions. This would be so even when some of the States pass into the hands of parties close to the Congress like the BKD or even the Jana Sangh or the SSP depending on the nature of the conflict. But when the Congress is replaced in the States by parties of the extreme left or parties representing sub-national aspirations, the conflicts could prove antagonistic contradictions.

To put the issue in perspective, it was not merely the absolute one-party dominance of the Congress that made for the distortions in the situation and recourse to extra-constitutional methods by the Centre to resolve non-antagonistic conflicts. The distortions had much to do with the power structure within the Congress

Party. The High Command (which meant Jawaharlal Nehru) could treat any national problem as a party problem and assume for itself the role of the sole arbiter in any inter-State or Centre-State dispute.

But this state of affairs ended even during the last days of Nehru. The Maharashtra-Andhra Pradesh-Mysore dispute over the Krishna-Godavari waters dispute which began almost 10 years ago is among three Congress-ruled States and has defied party-level solution to this day. The Maharashtra-Mysore border dispute is between two Congress States again.

#### Dispersal of Power

The weakening of the High Command's power in a way measures the conflict potential in the Centre-State relations. The election of successors to Nehru and Shastri and Indira Gandhi's re-election as Prime Minister have revealed that there is no leader with national acceptance any more and the Prime Ministers after Nehru owe their position to the support of the vertically interlocking Congress factions which constitute the major power group at the Centre. There is no single focus of power in the Congress any more. There are several foci of power, scattered horizontally in the States. This is true of all the all-India political parties.

In fact there is no all-India party in the real sense any more. The Congress, like any other party, is at best a federation of regional parties. The character of the Congress varies from State to State depending on the nature of the challenge it faces. Where the challenge comes from the right (as in the Hindi belt) it is a right-of-centre party and where it is from the left (as in Kerala and West Bengal) it is a left-of-centre party.

The picture is a little hazy now. Centre-State conflicts on peripheral issues need not be the concomitant of a Congress Centre and non-Congress States. During the first election of Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister, a Congress Chief Minister, asked where exactly

he came into the picture, snapped back: 'after all, what is the Centre if not a combination of States?'. The age of State satraps in the Congress had arrived. The strongmen had begun stage-managing the succession.

Paradoxically, the Chief Ministers were stronger in relation to the Centre when all the States were ruled by the Congress than when eight States had non-Congress ministries. After Mrs. Gandhi's take-over as Prime Minister, there were two critical confrontations between the Centre and the States (before the 1967 elections) and the Chief Ministers won hands down—over the abolition of food zones and scrapping of the Defence of India Rules.

Even with the decline of the Congress at the 1967 elections and the consequent loss of its manoeuvrability, there has been no basic Centre-State conflict, contrary to expectations. This might be due to two reasons. One, in the absence of political polarisation, the ideological issues have not crystallised. Two, there is a minimum 'consensus' among all the parties believing in parliamentary methods—ranging from the Swatantra party in Orissa to the Left Communist in Kerala, on maintaining the *status quo*. All politics are now power-oriented and the Centre would gladly permit any political party to run a ministry so long as the *status quo* is not challenged.

#### Mere Extensions

The non-Congress ministries in States have been mere extensions of the Congress rule at the Centre. Parties like the CPI, the CPI (M), SSP, the Swatantra and the Jana Sangh have been in power in one or more States and in Opposition in one or more States. But all of them are in the Opposition at the Centre. The Congress has been in power in some States and at the Centre and in opposition in some of the States. Only the separatist and professedly anti-Centre DMK was in a unique, enviable position—in power in the only State of its operation and in opposition at the Centre. The DMK's position, if

not its actual role, has been mutually exclusive.

The over-all pattern had the effect of freezing any Centre-State conflict even when so many States were out of Congress control. But the DMK's special position should have resulted in a real challenge to the Centre's authority. The Madras Government could have forced a showdown with the Centre on the language issue. But the DMK's anxiety to consolidate its political power in the State has resulted in a stalemate on the Hindi issue.

The Left Communist-led Ministry in Kerala could have forced a confrontation on the rice subsidy issue but it gave in tamely because it did not want to invite Central intervention. But the Kerala Ministry came close to defying the Centre in September last over the Ordinance banning the Central Government staff strike. Its Chief Minister contended that the constitutional obligation to ensure compliance with a Central law was 'consistent with the freedom to ignore it.' The Kerala Government nearly laid itself open to Central action but the Centre was reluctant to force the issue.

### Law and Order

It is particularly significant that non-Congress Governments after 1967 had always feared Central intervention on the grounds of alleged break-down in law and order, but the Centre never dismissed a ministry on this score. It could have done so in West Bengal at the height of the 'gherao' phase in the State. But the united front ministry there was dismissed because its House majority was in doubt in the view of the Governor. President's Rule was imposed later in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab and Pondicherry following a break-down of the Constitution as a result of floor-crossing or withdrawal of Congress support to a minority ministry and not because of any break-down in law and order.

In contrast, the 28-month-old Communist-led ministry in Kerala was dismissed in 1959 following an

alleged break-down in law and order but then the law and order situation was 'engineered' by certain political forces in the State with the help of the Centre. The so-called 'mass upsurge' which prompted the Centre to dismiss the government there was part of the process of open subversion of the democratic process and parliamentary system because the ministry's majority was never in doubt. The Congress tried and failed to organise a single defection from the Communist legislature party though the ministry was depending on a paper-thin margin of two. The ministry was never defeated on the floor of the House on any issue.

### Easiest Opening

Law and order is a State subject but this where the Centre can find the easiest opening for an intervention in a State. The Governor's assessment, which could be most subjective, is the deciding factor. It could well be that some of the State Governments (Congress or non-Congress) share a concept of law and order very much different from the Centre's or that of some other States. There could be multiple concepts of law and order. In the case of the September 1968 ordinance on the Central employees strike, if say half a dozen States had shared Nambudiripad's concept of law and order, the Centre would have found itself in a piquant situation.

Law and order could be one of the major areas of conflict between the Centre and the States in the future and a ministry like the one in Kerala might have to go on this issue. The constitutional position is rather bizarre here. If the Governor merely thinks law and order has broken down in his State, it is President's Rule there. But if law and order continues to be bad under President's Rule, what is the next step? Military rule? Again, if a law and order situation develops in a Union Territory directly administered by the Centre (e.g., the policeman's strike in New Delhi or the violence in connection with the anti-cow slaughter agitation in New Delhi

on November 7, 1966), what is the remedy?

### Polarisation

There are many other areas of Centre-State relations which are still undefined because the real issues are yet to emerge. Much of the discussion on the subject has been unreal because of its obsessive preoccupation with peripheral issues. The issues will crystallise only when the sub-national aspirations of the people acquire a sense of direction and an edge which would make their relationship with the Centre one of antagonistic contradiction. The issues would also crystallise when there is an ideological polarisation in the country making the Centre-State ideological conflicts antagonistic contradictions. All the collisions since 1967 have been within the framework of *status quo* politics.

Yet it is not difficult to visualise a confrontation, say, between a covertly secessionist government in Madras and a belligerently pro-Hindi Centre over the language issue or between a government in Kerala run by a communist party which has not made the parliamentary methods its sole philosophy but uses it only as one of the many weapons of class struggle, and a rightist, supra-nationalist Centre.

The chances of a confrontation between the coastal States with the Hindi midland as a whole through the Centre cannot be ruled out in the long run. The factors behind such a confrontation could be a weird combination of sub-national aspirations and an ideological conflict. The Constitution would be on trial only after the issues have crystallised. The rigidity of the Constitution would itself make for some kinds of conflicts. After the inevitable interaction, only a Second Republic based on a Constitution drawn up by those elected on the basis of adult franchise could restore the working arrangement between the Centre and the States. Anything short of a minimal Centre would not resolve the conflict.



# **A new pattern**

SUGATA DASGUPTA

A COUNTRY'S constitution like its history cannot be made in a day. It must change, instead, from time to time reflecting in its strides the aspirations of a growing culture. The political organisation for which the constitution provides

sanctions has likewise to be dynamic, flexible and adaptive. It is for this reason that George Washington, while giving the United States of America her constitution, said that she would need another in twenty year's time.

It is no surprise, therefore, that a country, especially a new democracy like ours, would in days of critical transition look for new institutional innovations. The poser is right that the contemporary political crisis in India, often dismissed as a problem of Centre-State relations, represents a much deeper malady and cannot be combated until a new political organisation with a new rationale and constitution finds its way.

### The Structure

'The fluidity of the political scene in the State marked by defections and toppling of governments'; 'the cries of revolt against the Centre'; 'conflicts between States and States as also between regions and regions'; 'the urges for autonomy and the sporadic struggles for secession', all these have become characteristic of Indian society today. They show that the political structure is not yet at peace with itself and the country is facing, after twenty years of waiting, a period of 'delayed' transition. The problems which were once pushed to the background and should have been sorted out earlier are thus forcing their way to the fore. As a result, the constitution itself is undergoing severe strains and the demand for a new political organisation has become irresistible.

The poser fails, however, to define the situation adequately and runs away from reality when it finds in the logistics of the present political crisis the need merely for a new organisation. What the situation calls for is something more fundamental; a need indeed not only for an organisation but for a new theory of politics and a different pattern of polity altogether.

What the constituents of such a polity are becomes evident when we grasp the real meanings of the contemporary upheaval. There are many who see in the maladjustments enumerated above the portents of deviance and fail to realise their real significance. They seek, therefore, to bring the erring

communities to book and to rectify the situation by certain proposals for 'reformation' of the political structure.

There are others, like this writer, who feel that the present situation is caused by certain fundamental urges which are seeking natural expression in the dominant sections of our society and are being throttled by the structure of our polity. These need not, therefore, be treated either as an expedient or as abnormal behaviour; they represent, on the other hand, certain basic trends of growth. A logical reorientation of the political system would help to channelise them constructively for a purposeful reconstruction of the society itself. What is required therefore, is not only a new 'organisational relation' between the Centre and States. An altogether different pattern of relationship and a new basis for distribution of powers and functions, between the States and the Centre as also between the various other limbs of the polity, will go a long way to legitimise these urges.

### The Cleavage

The cleavage today is not only between the two units. Sub-cultural incompatibilities that frustrate intra-State relations and create animosities between districts or regions within a State itself and conflicts that rage between territories, say the Aryan belt and non-Aryan, the South and the North, the Bengalee and the Assamese and between States and States are equally evident all over. What such strained societal relations clearly signify is that the various communities which form parts of a nation are seeking a new norm of political behaviour. This then is the search. The aim is to end the current situation of vertical monolithic control which exists between the various tiers of governments, one designated as 'higher' and the other 'lower' in the hierarchy of political relations.

The revolt, if any, is therefore against the political pyramid. What could replace it, in this context, is a concentric circle of community governments which function

over territories of varying sizes. Although interdependent and interconnected, each would yet be psychologically self-sufficient and politically responsible to its clientele. This process, popularly known as 'decentralisation', establishes horizontal relationships with 'sister' communities. No one would be 'supreme' here, no one more powerful than the other in the sense of 'authority', ranking. The governments at various levels of the village, Prakhanda, Zila, State and the Centre would function on the basis of carefully devised structural relationships.

There is no question in a set up like this of working for a 'strong' or 'weak' Centre or States. The line of political thinking that provides the rationale for the structure, envisages giving to each governmental tier the most appropriate powers—nay 'functions'—that it could perform. While each unit of government is free to discharge its responsibilities without inhibition and control, the areas of inter-relationship and joint work and the manner in which one tier, 'high' or 'low', would offer counsel and direction to the other is well laid down; no government claiming or arrogating to itself more functions or a role greater than it could efficiently perform or logically hold.

### Politics of Cooperation

The various units will in such a scheme of things be tied to each other not by strings of 'authority' but by legal, social and reciprocal relationships. The practice there would not be to put claims and counter-claims for more powers for a unit but to accept a new responsibility only when a government of a bigger area is prevailed upon by the next smaller territorial unit that the latter cannot discharge these responsibilities and that the other tier should take them up. 'Conflicts' between governments, in a system like this could *ipso facto* be replaced by the politics of 'cooperation', and the secessionist tendencies would be reduced to the minimum.

There are many who might think that such a political system could

be realised only in a utopia. Far from it; the contention of this paper is to the contrary. The logical trends germane in the contemporary social set-up today which do not find free outlet makes it evident, on the other hand, that the evolution of this type of a system is the most rational under the present circumstances and that the logic was all along inherent in the political process of the country, right from the time the constitution was first prepared.

When a constitution is framed, although it indicates whether the structure is 'federal' or 'unitary', it is only over the years that the history of political practices determine the real status. From the time the constitution became operative, there were thus two distinct pulls evident in the system, one formal and the other informal, the former seeking to centralise the power process and the other endeavouring to disperse it. While the latter became more evident in times of emergencies or crisis and especially when the 'authority' was weak, the formal leaders declaring the State as a federation always sought to strengthen the forces of centralisation. The informal structure endeavoured on the other hand to make the constitution not only 'federal' but also to shift the 'fulcrum' of power downwards. What is important in this context is the fact that both the 'pulls' were evident in the government as well as in the 'inner-party' politics that characterised the Indian National Congress of the day.

#### Centralisation

The forces of centralisation were built with care, even if unwittingly, by conventions and charisma. The policy of 'subventions and the development of the planning process, which made it almost a rule that a large portion of the financial outlay of the nation was to be administered even without the legislature voting these accounts, had in fact sought not only to centralise the decision-making process but also to subvert democracy.

The National Advisory Council led by a charismatic Prime Minister had become the focal point of all power and authority. Others, be it the State government or Congress bodies, were reduced to impotency.

The forces which were arrayed against the formal structure were, however, primarily concerned with their own status and with the fact that they were left out of the power game. They could not yet really assert themselves until the crisis came in 1964 in the demise of the first Prime Minister. It is from that time onwards that the struggle for power and, consequently, the process of dispersal and decentralisation began in right earnest.

While a Gandhi could nominate a Jawaharlal as his successor the selection of the second Prime Minister had to be done by a big group with all the State Congress bosses and Chief Ministers trying to arrive at a consensus. In the choice of the third, even the parliamentary party had to be brought into the picture.

#### Dispersal of Forces

If these shifts in the process of decision-making did not exactly mean decentralisation, they led at least to a dispersal of forces. As the onus thus started shifting, it was not difficult to see that an urgent pull for a further transmission of power downward became evident.

This led to a rise of district leadership which soon provided the mainspring of control of State politics. If the new leaders did not have a say in national affairs, their complete control over local politics had to be guaranteed. In Maharashtra and Gujarat, the power structure had in fact to be given formal recognition and substantial responsibility for the governance of the district was transferred to the Parishad.

In one of the States, where the Congress chief was also incidentally a member of the Syndicate, his position was considerably strengthened by the creation of a new organisation called the Association of Chairmen of Zilla Parishads. No amount of pleading

from the national Panchayat authorities that the post should go to a non-party leader and the organisation should be non-political was of any avail; for, the leader whose rôle in national affairs had by then become formidable looked to the new body for his real political support. In another State, a rebel Congress group which defected from the parent body and later became a leading partner in the 'non-Congress' coalition government had come to existence at a time when the two warring leaders of the State had suddenly come to terms and a large number of their followers, in villages and towns were unable to make up their local feuds. They had thus been looking for a new leader to own them.

These downward pulls, the revolts against State and central leadership, and the gradual coming of age of district and village leaders, is not a phenomenon confined only to the Congress Party. In many others, including the S.S.P., the Swatantra, and the P.S.P. there were occasions before the general elections when a candidate approved by the national party for a particular parliamentary seat was unceremoniously rejected by the local unit. What was interesting in the context was that the latter succeeded, in most of these cases, to change the national party line itself and the central parliamentary board had to accede to the requests of their local counterparts.

#### The Reality

If all these provide examples of dispersal of authority, if not of decentralisation, has not the time come to face this reality? A constitution which on the other hand seeks merely to combat this process is obviously doing no great service to democracy. This is exactly what is happening today. Whatever concessions the system is prepared to offer are only aimed at placating the new forces with the ultimate object, of course, of eliminating them altogether from the political fray. The recent efforts of non-Congress governments in Orissa and U.P. to immo-

bilise the Zilla Parishads are pointers towards this direction.

The democratic aspirations of the people of India are thus craving for self expression today and political organisations and leadership, both formal and informal, are fast coming into their own. The scramble for power, which had once started as an elite battle within the party caucus, has today swept the latter off their feet. This 'beckons' indeed, as the poster puts it, towards a new destiny!

The crisis is thus not the result of an unfortunate clash which has suddenly taken place between the two major political institutions of the country, namely, the Centre and the States. It is something more fundamental and has indeed long been inherent in the structure of the polity. It is because of this that Gandhi rejected the Indian Constitution even before he could have a good look at it. For, the whole rationale of the process was unacceptable to him and seemed erroneous.

It is not possible, however, nor is it desirable, to scrap the whole system in a day and to build a new one in its place. What is required, on the other hand, is to grasp the real meaning of these political resistances and gradually to move towards the reality.

### Suggestions

Two suggestions can be made in this context. One of these deals with values and the other with certain changes and innovations required in the structure. It is necessary to realise, so far as the former is concerned, that our concepts of national unity, homogeneity and integration are not to be treated as sacrosanct and the constitution has to grow along with the needs of a people. Once this position is accepted, two fundamental innovations could then be proposed which may go a long way to help the process of decentralisation to develop without radically altering the existing system of governments.

These relate to certain structural changes, as also to a necessary

redefinition of functions of the different tiers of the government. What is required in this connection is not to insist on uniformity in the distribution of subjects in Centre-State relations and also between districts in a State. All States, thus, need not necessarily exercise the same powers; some States for their specific needs have different or more functions to perform than others. The principle could in similar manner be extended to 'State-district' relations.

### Stronger Nation

The other innovation concerns distribution of powers. The specific proposal is to add one more list to the existing two; this would specify the scope of work of the district or of other units of the government. The exact number and description of subjects to be included in each list and the typologies of relationship legally permissible among the various sub-units of the main body would have to be determined by reviewing the merits of each individual case from time to time.

Will such a system, permitting so much of freedom to so many of the constituents of a unit, make for a strong or a weak 'federation'? This, to my mind, is a very simple question. For, even if it makes the 'federation' weak, there can be no doubt that such an arrangement will make India as a nation immeasurably stronger and unite the people of the country with a rare bond of 'freedom' and 'opportunity' as has never been done before. It will also 'solidify' the 'fluidity' of the polity and enable the 'dissidents' and 'resisters' of the day to merge themselves in the conceptual 'identity' called India. Such an India will be based on 'will' and not force; and make the many unnecessary and self-defeating correctives which one applies today, totally irrelevant. It will not require, for example, to call the military and the police to deal with the deviants of the 'family' as frequently as we do now. This will eliminate, thereby, the great danger of the army emerging as our saviour in place of the civil conscience of the nation!

# More authoritative centre

GOPAL KRISHNA

AN increasing sense of anxiety characterises current discussions on the relations between the Union of India and its constituent units. It is not occasioned by the demands made by some non-Congress governments in favour of greater autonomy for the States, but has deeper roots: it is caused by a feeling that Indian unity is being subjected to intolerable strains and that a combination of much luck and skill will be needed to preserve it through the political crisis that is expected to confront the country soon, if it is not already with us. The crisis is, above all, one of viable Central political authority—the key element in the continued unity of India.

The political unity of India is of relatively recent origin. Nationalist considerations no longer require us to assert that India has been a unity since our early history; on the contrary our very

concern for the preservation and deepening of Indian unity should make us acknowledge that the periods when the country was politically united were few and far between, and that in all cases but one this unity was imposed by alien rule and did not represent an achievement of the Indian people. In his monumental work, *Science and Civilization in China*, Professor Joseph Needham has produced a chart showing the periods of unification and partition in the history of China. It shows that China has enjoyed a unified political authority for over four-fifths of her history since the first unification under the Chins in 221 B.C. A similar chart for India would show that our experience has been almost exactly the reverse.

Excluding the brief periods of externally-imposed political unity, we ought also to note the histo-

rical failure of all indigenous governments to extend their authority over the entire sub-continent; the aspiration to rule over the whole of India, common to nearly all ambitious rulers in the past, was never fully realised and, therefore, Indian political tradition did not develop a 'national' orientation. A large part at least of our current anxieties about the viability of the political unity of India proceeds from the historically incomplete political conquest of different parts of the sub-continent by an indigenous central authority. Professor Basham has argued in his *Indian Sub-Continent in Historical Perspective* that the tradition of political disunity need not necessarily persist, and while we may have good reasons for sharing his guarded hopefulness, we must be aware of the fundamentally innovative character of our current attempt to build in conditions of freedom a structure of political unity in a country that has never possessed it.

#### Nation Formation

We know as yet very little about the processes of nation-formation. But one thing seems quite obvious: a long period of continuous and willing subjection to a central authority not looked upon as alien fosters among a people a sense of political community, a commonly shared culture assists the process but is never by itself sufficient. The roots of nationality lie in common obedience to a national authority.

It is a commonplace of political discourse in India to characterize Indian unity as 'unity in diversity' and to describe the Indian achievement as a synthesis of divergent elements, whether social groups or schools of thought. In recent years Indian political leaders, aware of the insistent particularities of the Indian people, have endeavoured to build up political unity on the basis of the principle of 'unity in diversity', hoping that with the growth of citizenship-oriented nationality, political unity will acquire a firm foundation in the sentiments and

loyalties of the people. But it ought to be acknowledged that the Indian genius for achieving a synthesis of incompatible elements is overrated, that the principle of 'unity in diversity' does not sanction every existing diversity, and that however necessary and expedient concessions to diversity may be, a viable nation can be built only on an expanding basis of commonly shared attitudes, concerns and orientations.

#### De-centralization

The debate on the merits of centralization versus decentralization has been carried on in our country now for almost fifty years. The case for decentralization has been argued in terms of the inescapable compulsions of the Indian situation: in a vast country with a very large population, a multiplicity of languages and well-established regional identities, these diversities need to be accommodated in a political system which allows the subordinate units substantial power in order to satisfy their aspirations. Considerations of efficient administration also dictate a large measure of devolution of functions and power.

The Marxists used to formulate their case for a weak central authority (they perhaps still do) in the name of their doctrine of nationalities. The Marxist theory of nationalities is inimical to nation-building in India, because whatever Marxists may mean by 'nationalities' and whatever the extent of autonomy considered appropriate for them in a socialist or communist State, in our present circumstances any talk of 'nationalities' is bound to assist the forces of disruption and not of unification. A doctrinaire outlook combined with short-term political tactics could do a great deal of harm to the country in circumstances which require caution and care in the formulation of political propositions bearing on the unity of India.

The Gandhians, and socialists at an earlier period, pleaded for decentralization on the ground that the dispersal of power was more

conducive to the growth of a democratic polity than its concentration, especially in a country like India where political traditions have been mainly authoritarian.

Both the moral and the expedient justifications for decentralization overlook the fundamental problem of nation-building in India; in the moral argument there is also a major fallacy regarding the problem of the control of power. It seems to me obvious that nation-building in an amorphous cleavage-ridden society requires a framework of comprehensive, stable authority within which regulated expression can be permitted to heterogeneous elements. The moral argument in support of dispersal of power appears to have no validity. In democratic societies it has been a commonly observed phenomenon that power is exercised less arbitrarily at the higher levels than the lower; it also tends to be more innovative and purposeful at these levels. The need in a modern or modernizing society is not for the dispersal of power but for its better regulation and accountability.

#### Distribution of Power

The founders of the Indian Union were aware of the contradictory pulls in our society and provided for a political system with a pronounced bias towards the concentration of power at the Centre, particularly in emergencies, while at the same time devolving many important functions upon the States. The distribution of powers laid down in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution gave the Union Government exclusive control over defence, foreign affairs, communications, finance, inter-State commerce, the higher judiciary, central services and elections; the Union was also invested with residuary powers. The Constitution gave to the States control over public order, police, the administration of justice, local self-government, education and agriculture; it conferred concurrent jurisdiction in the spheres of criminal and personal law, economic and social planning,

industrial development and the press.

### The Political System

In the post-independence period it was obvious that economic and political development would require central initiative and co-ordinated effort. The prestige of the national leadership, the resources available to the Central Government and the issues that dominated public life (chiefly foreign affairs and economic planning) were such as to give the impression of decisive dominance of the Central Government in the affairs of the nation. The textbook understanding of the Indian political system was that instead of being a 'true' federation, it was characterised by the subordination of the States to the national government. This was also the impression of the political leaders. How accurate was this understanding? If it represented the reality during the early years of independence, has the picture changed since? If it has changed, in what respect has it changed? And with what consequences for the nation?

It is a common theme among academic and other writers on Indian politics that the Centre has been weakened especially since 1962, and that following the creation of linguistic States and their consolidation, power has shifted from the Centre to the States. In effect what we have witnessed over the past decade is the gradual emergence of a federal polity reflecting the essentially federal (i.e., regionally heterogeneous) society of post-partition India. If the conflicts of a plural society had made the founders of the Indian Union seek a strong Centre, the inevitable concessions to a federal society (once it found political expression in the reorganised States) have led to the erosion of Central power.

The only detailed investigation of Centre-State relations that we have—in terms of the relations between the Centre and one of the States, West Bengal—comes from an American scholar, M. Franda, whose recently published study, *West Bengal and the Federalising*

*Process in India* (Princeton, 1968), and in particular his discussion of the Damodar Valley Corporation and of land reforms in West Bengal, deserves detailed consideration for the light it throws on the manner in which Centre-State relations have developed since independence. It corrects the impression that because for many years the same party ruled in all the States and at the Centre the relations between the Centre and the States were smooth, though admittedly not without differences.

It also demonstrates that in crucial matters involving State interests, despite the seemingly powerful authority of the Centre under Nehru's leadership and the political compulsions operating in a system of one party dominance, State governments almost always had their way and there was no exercise of effective Central authority to compel conformity to policies considered to be in the general interest of the nation.

### The DVC Example

The Damodar Valley Project, conceived as a multi-purpose scheme of flood control, irrigation, water transport and electricity production and distribution for the development of an extensive region of Bihar and Bengal, and financed largely by the Central Government, was more or less systematically impeded by the Congress Government of West Bengal under the leadership of B. C. Roy after the first phase of its development had been completed, for no reason other than that the D.V.C. (Damodar Valley Corporation) was an autonomous organisation not subject to the control of the West Bengal Government.

Within a year of its creation, trouble began over the appointment of the Chief Engineer, 'whether he would be a Bengali or a Bihari, or perhaps an individual from another State'; 'members of the D.V.C. board became, by custom, representatives of the participating governments (one from West Bengal and one from Bihar) and thus susceptible to State pressures...'; because of the

large expenditure involved in power development, irrigation and flood control 'each of the States shared an interest in gaining control of the policy-making apparatus of the Corporation... neither State was willing to surrender the power to make policy decisions to a neutral autonomous body (the D.V.C.) or to a neutral arbiter (the Chief Justice) so long as the States themselves felt that they could influence the decisions and gain their own ends'.

### Irresponsible Behaviour

After 1957, instead of building additional power capacity under the D.V.C., the West Bengal Government proceeded to set up thermal power stations directly under its own control, 'vetoed every proposal that was made to extend the operations of the D.V.C. in West Bengal...' and refused to extend any financial support for the D.V.C. schemes.

When it came to irrigation, the West Bengal Government was even more irresponsible. Although it had agreed to charge a betterment levy for irrigation water provided by the D.V.C., the Congress Party in West Bengal and the State Government joined in abetting non-payment of the levy, and when under some pressure from the Central Government, the State Government agreed to impose water rates, it did so in such a manner that the amounts remained unrealized.

Franda's conclusion on this sorry episode deserves to be quoted at length:

'When the States wanted to use DVC power to meet most of the power needs within each State, they were able to gain control over the policy-making apparatus of the Corporation and to channel power into almost all areas of the two states. When they wanted to diminish the scope of the power projects within the valley they were able to alter the initial plans of the Corporation and in fact to eliminate completely the entire second stage of the project. When Bihar wanted to use the

DVC to build a number of large thermal power plants at Chandrapura, the DVC was almost immediately charged with construction of the Chandrapura project; and at the same time when the West Bengal government decided to enter the power field on its own, it was able to curtail almost entirely the power development activities of the DVC in the state of West Bengal.

### Harmful Decisions

...At least on two accounts, the policies adopted by the States, and accepted by the Center, ran counter to the interests of national planning and policy-making bodies. First, the decision by the states to diminish the scope of the *hydro-electric* projects of the Damodar Valley scheme, and to simultaneously undertake or promote *thermal* power projects, ran directly counter to the policies of both the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Power and Irrigation. Both of these bodies have insisted in all of their statements and publications on power development that the preservation of high-grade reserves of coal, and the development of hydroelectric as opposed to thermal power, were crucial to the future development of India. Despite the obvious conflict between state and central government policy involved in the decisions that were taken in regard to power development, however, neither the Planning Commission nor any central government body was willing to oppose the policies of the states. Second, the decision by the West Bengal Government to create its own power grid in West Bengal ran counter to that policy of the central government wherein the electricity grids in the eastern region were to be combined and standardized under a regional authority. In fact, at least one central government Minister argued that the creation of separate state grids, equal in size to that of the DVC, would end all possibilities of ever effecting a uni-

form policy for power generation in the eastern region.

'The evolution of a policy for the construction, maintenance, and distribution of DVC irrigation facilities provides an example of a situation in which the proposed plans and programs of the central and state governments came into direct conflict. The West Bengal Government found a great deal of resistance within its borders to the proposed DVC plans for the distribution of irrigation benefits. And West Bengal—by working against the collection of the irrigation cess, by allowing cultivators to sabotage the irrigation channels and bunds, and by refusing to contribute its share to the Corporation or to pay its debt to the center clearly took a position in support of the conception of state interests that was present in the minds of most Bengalis...the state government was, in the final analysis, allowed to pursue its own conception of its own interests and to veto or negate most of the center's planned programmes.'

The flood control measures envisaged under the scheme were similarly sabotaged by the West Bengal Government. Flood control, entirely for the benefit of areas falling within the State of West Bengal, required the construction of four additional dams with reservoirs in Bihar, which would also have supplied water for Bihar industries. This part of the scheme was never undertaken because the West Bengal Government saw no substantial benefit accruing to itself, overlooking the flood control aspect of the scheme. This neglect of flood control measures has inflicted heavy losses on the people of West Bengal.

When it came to land reforms, the West Bengal Government did not implement its own legislation, which was enacted under pressure from the Planning Commission.

### Conclusion

The conclusion that is suggested by this case study is that State

governments pursue fairly successfully their own policies in opposition to Central Government policies, in extreme cases by non-cooperation but more often by non-implementation of the policies laid down by the Centre.

However, despite the success of the States in hindering Central policies when these did not suit them, there was under Congress domination no question of a head on clash between the Centre and the States. But with the displacement of the Congress Party from office in several States by parties which are essentially local (D.M.K.) or which are seeking to enhance their power in the States where they are politically significant (e.g. Communists in Kerala and West Bengal), tensions were bound to arise between the Congress-controlled Centre and at least some of the non-Congress ruled States. The generally poor performance of the non-Congress governments and the amorphous character of the anti-Congress coalitions have prevented the full impact of this development from being felt. But should more coherent local parties or coalitions emerge, the strains on Indian unity will be much greater than those witnessed so far.

### Nation Building

Nation-building through the operation of the federal system is today faced with two major problems: (1) disparities between States and (2) tendencies for local considerations to take precedence over national objectives.

Very large areas of India are backward and poorly endowed and in a poor country regional differences in degrees of poverty can become a source of grave tensions. The relatively better off States have less than a quarter of their population in areas of low development, while the proportion is over two-thirds for the relatively poor States. The burden of development is much greater on the latter. A programme of planned development of the country as a whole would have to aim at



eliminating such disparities. But such an effort could arouse opposition from the relatively better off States and, should an alliance develop between local patriotism and economic interest, this could constitute a danger to the Union.

### Linguistic States

The creation of linguistic States has resulted in the consolidation of local identities which now compete with national identity for the allegiance of the people. This formation of linguistic States was perhaps inevitable, for so powerful an aspiration could not have been successfully frustrated by a democratically elected Parliament. It has however created a new problem—that of linguistic minorities. In several States there are a substantial number of persons speaking a language or languages other than the language of the State. In Andhra Pradesh there are over two and a half million Urdu speakers, in Assam over two million Bengali speakers, in Madras over three million Telugu speakers and in Mysore over a million Marathi speakers.

These and other similarly placed citizens of India have become insecure in their places of habitation. There is urgent need to tone down strident regionalism in order to assure equality of opportunity and treatment to every citizen in whichever area of India he happens to be. This cannot be done except by a central government that takes measures to curb regionalism. One possible remedy would be a further reorganisation of the States, creating linguistically homogeneous smaller units; this might also be administratively more efficient. The existence of more than one State for a language group would also preclude the emergence of an entity that could compete with the nation for the citizen's primary loyalty.

An important question for the future of the Indian federation is whether competing parties seek a national mandate or only a local mandate. The difficulties of operating effectively throughout the country are so great that no party other than the Congress has so far

been able to emerge as a truly national party enjoying substantial support in nearly all parts of the country, and the temptation to the other parties to entrench themselves in the areas of their present strength (Communists in Kerala and West Bengal, Swatantra in Gujarat and Orissa, Jana Sangh in the Hindi speaking areas) rather than to seek a wider basis of support could drive them to champion local causes at variance with national policies.

Such a development would lead to a further weakening of the Centre as a result of the compromises that would have to be made to accommodate within the federal framework localised elements representing widely divergent interests and ideologies. It is not certain whether the present system could accommodate communism in Kerala and free enterprise in Gujarat.

### Local Conflicts

On the part of the Centre there has been a consistent failure to accumulate power by a judicious handling of local conflicts and situations. The rule of the Congress Party in the States and the Centre inhibited forceful intervention by the latter when States under Congress rule were poorly administered or did not pull their weight in implementing national policies. For example, the Congress Government of Orissa was known to be corrupt and Central action against it would have enhanced the power and prestige of Central authority throughout the country, but just because it was a Congress Government no drastic action was taken.

The case of Bihar was worse. A government incapable of administering famine relief was allowed to carry on when its dismissal would have been generally welcomed and would probably have helped the Congress Party itself even in that State. No action was taken against the Congress Government in Assam which had allowed a linguistic minority to be wantonly attacked and pillaged in

the frenzy of the language agitation of 1960.

Whatever the past failures, it is obvious that the authoritativeness of the Centre needs to be effectively established if the Union is to work as a cohesive entity. Political institutions, in our case, are a contrivance designed to serve certain purposes, the chief among them being the creation of a national political community. If the existing arrangements do not serve the purpose well enough, they ought to be modified.

### Effective Authority

In the early years of independence when rather insubstantial issues of foreign policy and ideology dominated, public discussion, the inappropriateness of the present distribution of powers between the Centre and the States was not revealed. With the dramatic emergence of the problems of agriculture, education and law and order—all reserved to the States in the Seventh Schedule—it has become obvious that the Centre ought to have a much greater say in these spheres than it is at present allowed under the Constitution.

The nation's interest would require the Centre to compel the Madras Government to permit facilities for learning Hindi to be established in that State for those wishing to learn it, and to enforce compliance by the Kerala Government with the Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance. The implementation of land reforms, the evolution of a coherent educational policy and the assurance of peaceful conditions in the States require effective Central initiative, and the Constitution needs to be amended to provide for it.

In the meantime steps ought to be taken to evolve procedures for the settlement of disputes between the States, and between the States and the Centre. One of the regrettable consequences of the Congress style of conflict resolution through informal consensus was the failure to evolve formal machinery for handing down binding decisions. There is an imperative need for such a machinery to be speedily developed.

# Books

**UNION-STATE RELATIONS IN INDIA** Edited by  
S.A.H. Haqqi.

Meenakshi Prakashan, 1967.

The dramatic changes in the Indian political scene resulting from the fourth general elections were not altogether unexpected to many. It would, however, be a tall claim to say that the unfolding of the subsequent events were exactly anticipated. The enormous erosion of the Congress Party's political influence had become quite apparent even before 1966 was half way through. But the alternates had not yet emerged on the scene. Soothsayers still maintained a safe distance from irrevocable commitments.

Naturally, therefore, any effort to size up the developing scene could only confine itself to explaining the limitations and possibilities of the then existing situation. Nothing more than that has been attempted in this volume of essays on constitutional provisions guiding Centre-State relations.

A postscript, obviously written after the constitutional impasse in Rajasthan in the wake of the general elections, and the consequent imposition of President's Rule there, does indicate some of the basic problems with regard to Centre-State relations which were later to acquire tremendous constitutional import. For instance, the reference to the political affiliation of the Governor and the use of his powers in the sphere of State politics: 'It is, of course,

quite likely that if the Governor of Rajasthan had not been a Congressman and a party nominee, his motives would not have been so easily questioned...

The role of the Governor as an agent of the Centre, in a State where the government had a different political affiliation from that of the Centre, came to acquire a key position in the Centre-State relations through 1967 and early this year.

In the post-election period, and particularly just after the general elections, the Prime Minister's statement of cooperation with all the State governments, appeared to fulfill the expectation of a section of the people that Centre-State relations, in the changed circumstances, would be placed on a new basis. A more realistic interpretation to the Articles of our Constitution would be put. The existence of different political affiliations at the Centre and in the States would not come in the way of smooth communication between them. Implementation of national policies would not suffer because of divergent political objectives.

This hope itself was unrealistic. The voters in the fourth general elections were determined to record their accumulated grievances against mis-government that had reduced them to a state of utter hopelessness, and they voted against the Congress. Yet, they did not have the benefit of a tried alternative, and expected that a conglomeration of opposition parties would serve the purpose, even though temporarily, by the process of checks and balances of their own political diversities.

As it turned out, the voters in a large majority of States opted for a coalition of opposition parties as the new form of government to replace the monopoly of Congress Party rule, but they were not yet confident about the same pattern delivering the goods from the strategic position in New Delhi. At one stage, after the fall of the Congress government in Uttar Pradesh, some people talked of a train journey from Calcutta to Amritsar passing through 'liberated' areas. Nine States out of 17 in all, and the Union Territory of Delhi, had gone out of the Congress fold. Yet, the Centre, wielding over-riding powers over the States, continued to be in the hands of the Congress Party.

This is not the proper place for a discussion of the subsequent developments, although the topic should be of abiding interest to constitutional experts. But one thing is certain. The variety of conflicts that arose between the Congress Centre and mainly the non-Congress State governments, had a tremendous bearing on the constitutional provisions that 'determine' their mutual relations.

What they are, and how they apply in respect of each other, have been discussed in detail in this volume in a number of essays by professors of political science and allied subjects. Those on Centre-State relations in respect of planning and financial aspects, emergency provisions, powers of the President and Governors, civil services, etc., have noted the highly

centralised system that had come to exist. To that extent, these essays would characterise our Constitution as mainly unitary with some minor aspects akin to federalism thrown in. Naturally, they tend to give the impression that the Indian Constitution, by implication, at least, demands complete subordination of the States to the Centre in regard to all major social and economic policies, apart from those governing international relations.

In contrast, some other essays have traced the history of constitution-making in India, emphasising that federalism was the keynote to the original draft. The objectives of the national movement, as embodied in the Congress Party's resolutions and declarations, had laid down a federal type of government at the Centre deriving its authority from the voluntarily federating autonomous States. In other words, the residuary powers rested with the States, except in respect of certain matters of common interest like defence, communications, external relations, etc., which were handed over to the Centre by common consent. The concept of linguistic States was also the outcome of practical experience derived in the struggle for national independence, and not as a sop to regional or parochial pressures developed after the exit of the British.

But a big dent in this common understanding was caused by the partition of the country. The original draft did take note of the peculiar situation created by the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslim minority. The holocaust resulting from partition, the utter helplessness shown by the civil authorities in face of the communal carnage, and the existence of a 'strong group of conservative, communal elements within the ruling party, contributed to change this understanding. The demand for a strong Centre, in view of the obvious failure of the State authorities to maintain law and order and offer security to the minority communities, caught on. The federal characteristics of the Draft Constitution were pruned and replaced with provisions that left considerable powers with the Centre.

Yet, this could not be done before overcoming strong opposition within the ruling party, sometimes with the help of whips and fiats. The changes were questioned, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had once to assuage the charged feelings by saying: 'As to the relation between the Centre and States, it is necessary to bear in mind the fundamental principle on which it rests. The basic principle of federalism is that the legislative and executive authority is partitioned between the Centre and the States not only by any law to be made by the Centre but by the Constitution itself... The States under our Constitution are in no way dependent upon the Centre for their legislative or executive authority. The Centre and the States are co-equal in this matter. It is difficult to see how such a Constitution can be called centralism.'

In respect of certain over-riding powers given to the Centre, Dr. Ambedkar asked the critics to bear

in mind 'that these over-riding powers do not form the normal feature of the Constitution. Their use and operation are expressly confined to emergencies only'. With the passage of time, the concept of the 'emergency' has undergone a change. Nor do the discerning concede that the mere partitioning of the legislative and executive authority between the Centre and the States make for the federal structure envisaged by the framers of the Draft Constitution.

The existence of these two apparently contradictory concepts, federal and unitary, in our Constitution has led to divergent interpretations by the Congress Centre which looks for various props to uphold its authority, and the non-Congress States which want to exercise their right to autonomy in order to undermine the claim to that authority.

The developments since the general elections in February 1967—the formation of non-Congress coalition governments in States alongside the Congress Centre, the eventual disintegration of these coalitions owing to political defections, and, above all, the failure of the Congress Party in all these States to step into the resultant vacuum—have led to the demand, although not very strong as yet, for the convening of a new constituent assembly to draft a constitution alive to the changed circumstances. No constitution is immutable, and the present one has been amended on more than one occasion in recognition of new developments.

For those who wish to examine the issues involved in this controversy over Centre-State relations, the present collection of essays will provide handy background reading material. One would have expected the editor to provide a summation of the issues raised in the different essays. A bit more care in the production stage could have avoided some howlers in the footnotes where the Constituent Assembly Debates have been abbreviated to C.I.D.

Saral Patra

## UNION-STATE FINANCIAL RELATIONS By D. T. Lakdawala.

Lalvani Publishing House, 1967.

The Union-State financial relations have been a matter of controversy for many years and this controversy has been heightened particularly after the fourth general elections. In order to find a reasonable solution to this problem, government has constituted finance commissions from time to time. In this 120 page publication, D. T. Lakdawala has tried to lay down a framework within which healthy relations between the Centre and the States could develop.

The problem of Indian federal finance is a product of our political set up. Even before India

achieved independence and became a real federal democracy, Centre-State financial relations had assumed vital importance and many a times the question of tax sharing was settled through awards. The Constituent Assembly of India, realising the great need for flexibility in balancing devices and seeing the great inconveniences which rigid provisions had put other federations to, made arrangements for a periodical revision of these arrangements in the Constitution. The Indian Constitution, therefore, provides for the appointment of a finance commission whose recommendations must be taken into account in deciding the grants-in-aid of the States' revenues, the sharing of taxes and other matters referred to it. So far, four finance commissions have submitted their recommendations and the fifth commission has been appointed recently.

As the author has pointed out, the distribution of taxes in India is more logical and thorough than in many countries. In the first place, all the tax powers are enumerated either in List I, Union List of the Seventh Schedule, or in List II, the State List. No tax is mentioned in the Concurrent List at all which would cover many important taxes elsewhere. There is thus an attempt to avoid all overlapping. In its distribution of tax powers between the Union and the States, the Indian situation is unique in many ways. The Union Government has the power to levy progressive or heavy all-India taxes like the general income tax, company taxation, capital gains tax, terminal tax, taxes on inter-State commerce etc. The States, on the other hand, have with them land revenue, agricultural income tax, taxes on sale and purchase, taxes on professions, vehicle tax, entertainment tax, etc. Further, two important sources of revenue, viz., income tax and central excise were to be compulsorily shared between the Centre and the States.

While these ingenious devices were made for an easing of the situation, they also brought to the forefront the difficulties associated with tax sharing. Two major gaps were revealed in the working of the Finance Commission. The Commission gives grants only in aid of revenue; grants-in-aid of capital expenditure or loans are held to be outside its purview. In recent years, the capital expenditure of the States has been increasing rapidly—even more rapidly than revenue expenditure. A substantial proportion of this is met from central assistance. It has been held that the Finance Commission cannot provide for these. Further, Article 282 which provides for grants for any public purpose by the Union or the States has been used for sizeable planning of grants outside the scope of the Finance Commission. It is a moot point whether it would be within the jurisdiction of the Finance Commission to recommend planning grants on revenue account. The Fourth Finance Commission seemed to hold it would be, though the recommendations

# Communications

My hearty congratulations on the October 1968 issue of SEMINAR on 'Our Security'—a symposium on the defence capabilities of the nation: it throws much light on a subject of which the public are generally ignorant. For example, I was not aware of the existence of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. The need for such an Institute was stressed by Sharada Mukherjee, M.P. at one of the meetings of the Rotary Club of Bombay. Could not the Institute take more publicity measures so as to make its existence and service known to the public with a view to enlisting their support?

We are having many conferences and seminars on import substitution. One of the suggestions which deserves consideration is made by Seminarist in his article on 'Self Reliance' where he says 'Every time production is established with foreign know-how, simultaneous action is not initiated for establishing design facilities and R and D to enable the country to keep abreast with developing techniques'. This advice should be taken to heart not only by the defence services but also by the private and public sector undertakings.

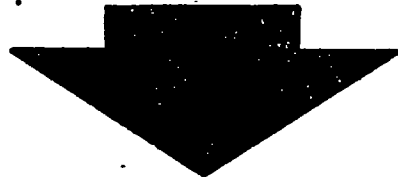
Another suggestion which has been made is to integrate defence industrialisation with

economic development. Somehow, we have been taught to think in separate compartments, and each government department, and each private and public sector undertaking thinks in its own groove. Can we not enlist the services of both the private and public sector industry and integrate them with the requirements of defence?

Modern defence requirements are so varied, complex and all-pervasive that without a strong industrial base the defence preparations would never be satisfactory. At the time of the Pakistani attack, the defence services were feverishly asking the private sector undertakings to supply them with so many items required for defence. If there was integration and far-sighted planning between defence and private industry as also with public sector industries, there would be a better showing in future, whenever India is threatened with aggression. May I add that, with the necessity of defence against two neighbours who are far from friendly, it is necessary to stimulate public opinion and enlist its co-operation rather than treat defence as something sacrosanct and remote.

Bombay

R. G. SARAIYA.



WE ARE MOST ANXIOUS THAT  
READERS GIVE US  
THEIR VIEWS  
ON THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE  
DISCUSSED ON THESE PAGES FROM  
MONTH TO MONTH  
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE EDITOR  
SHOULD BECOME A REGULAR FEATURE  
IF  
YOU  
JOIN THE DEBATE IN

**seminar**

of the Third Commission in this regard were not accepted. On grounds of appropriateness and expediency, in any case, these have been held out of bounds. Thus, the exclusion of grants and loans on capital account as well as planning grants on revenue account from the scope of the Finance Commission has the unfortunate consequence that the Commission controls only a small part of the transfers to the States.

The study concludes that the Finance Commission has not been able to fulfil its legitimate role in the present set-up because of two major factors. Firstly, its role vis-a-vis the Planning Commission has not yet been fully defined; the present lines of demarcation have made its work highly dependent on that of the Planning Commission with few possibilities of useful independent work. Secondly, the Finance Commission being an ad hoc body each time with an entirely different personnel and perhaps an entirely different research staff, has not been able to devote the necessary attention and time to the question of using Union-State transfers in the optimum manner. The author rightly recommends that it is essential to preserve some stability and continuity by appropriate changes in the composition and duration of the Finance Commission, which should be made a standing body.

The author has made many imaginative and useful suggestions in regard to the criteria and procedure for distribution of revenue between the Centre and the States and the functions of the Finance Commission vis-a-vis the Planning Commission. The suggestion that developmental activities should have supremacy in deciding financial relations is very sound and needs to be followed. The study clearly points out that conditional grants on the present scale do not achieve any significant purpose, they distort State priorities, undermine their resource use and create needless friction. The methods of the Planning Commission in disbursing this aid through negotiations do not elicit the best from the States and are likely increasingly to create a sense of injustice and discontent.

According to the analysis given in the book, conditional grants are needed only in a few cases where the Centre must initiate a new process of development or conduct pilot projects or in spheres of State action where the need for uniformity is paramount. Unconditional grants would be the most suitable general method for helping development in State spheres. In deciding their quantum, past performance and the present programme should be important criteria, but once again no condition should be attached so that the States have unfettered freedom to decide their own course of action. An important element of the grants should have an egalitarian basis, to enable to backward States to achieve and lay down standards of social services and economic overheads if they levied an average rate of taxation and operated with fair efficiency. In order to obviate criticism and suspicion and at the

same time ensure a firm hand, the unconditional grant should be given by a quasi-judicial body, a Finance Commission which sets down its report in writing and is not influenced by any opportunistic considerations.

D. T. Lakdawala deserves congratulation for bringing out this worthy and analytical publication which will offer useful guidelines to the Fifth Finance Commission and the Planning Commission in the allocation of resources to the States.

M. L. Garg

**THE FOUNDATIONS OF INDIAN FEDERALISM** By  
K. R. Bombwall.

Asia Publishing House, 1967.

There is no gainsaying that the last general elections cast a heavy strain on the federal structure of the Indian political system. With the break-up of the monopoly of power which the Congress had enjoyed for about two decades, the federal character of the Constitution has found itself exposed not only to diverse political pulls but, what is more, the disparate social and economic status of the different States has found an opportunity to express itself in an uninhibited manner. With these developments, what character the federal polity will assume needs to be watched.

For an understanding of the future as it may unfold itself, Bombwall has made a valuable contribution in his book. The study is not merely a narrative of the textual analysis of constitutional acts or of the development of federal institutions but is mainly an enquiry into the interaction of various socio-political factors which not only prompted and conditioned the development of federalism in India but have made the Indian federal pattern *sui generis*.

Divided in eleven chapters, the book begins with an exposition of various opinions regarding the nature of the Indian federal system. This is followed by an analysis of the centripetal as well as centrifugal tendencies in the Indian polity right from the ancient period to the transfer of power in 1947. Entitled the 'Imperatives of Federalism in India', a major portion of this chapter turns out to be a summary of the chapters which follow and as such is repetitive. An elucidation of these 'imperatives' could more appropriately be put in the last chapter entitled 'summary'.

Examining British policy in India, the author maintains that although the new rulers, apt pupils as they were of the Mughals in several respects, started with marked unitarian predilections they were gradually compelled to federalise Centre-Province relations. With centralisation carried to a climax under the Charter Act of 1953, a movement in the reverse direction began after the mutiny. The six decades beginning from 1861, could be viewed in this context as a period in which the 'infrastructure of freedom' emerged. Formally, India remained a

unitary State but, in effect, a distinction was made between local and all-India matters. With growing decentralization as well as with the gradually increasing representative character of the provinces, the provincial individuality began to develop so that even a person like Lord Curzon found it difficult to contain 'the petty kings of these dominions.' It was in this period that the cry of provincial autonomy was raised by the nationalists.

The introduction of the Montford reforms could be claimed as a step towards a formal though partial federalisation of Union-State relations in India. This shift in British policy from decentralisation to federalism was an inevitable concomitant of its decision to introduce responsible government in India. Notwithstanding the debate between the autonomists and centrists during 1924-1930 regarding the extent of the devolution of power, a consensus on the inevitability of acceptance of federalism as the cornerstone of any constitutional scheme had emerged.

The question was no more whether India was to be a unitary or a federal State but what type of federation it was to be. Linguism, communalism and the question of the future political status of princely India vis-a-vis British India were the factors and forces which facilitated the federal orientation of the State structure, leading to the Act of 1935. The federal part of the Act was however unacceptable to the various political forces in India for diverse and often conflicting reasons. Bombwall has given a succinct analysis of the reasons which prompted Indian India and the Muslim League initially to facilitate and later block the federal scheme.

The partition of India and the expeditious integration of the Indian States had a catalytic effect on the emergent federal pattern of free India. 'They caused a marked shift from a federal polity based on a minimal Centre and a maximum autonomy for constituent units to one with a paramount Centre. The new situation called for a re-examination of the rationale of a federal system in the context of Indian conditions without, however, eroding the *raison d'être* of federalism as the principle of India's new constitutional order.'

Dealing with the emerging federal pattern of free India in two chapters the author has discussed the shift towards a strong Centre which occurred in the early stages and the balance of power that emerged as a result of planning which he believes, contrary to the widely held belief, has also shifted the federal equation in favour of the States in regard to the implementation of the planned schemes. He finally concludes that with the linguistic consolidation of the States and with the probable end of one party dominance, 'Union-States relations will develop into a more really federal equation than is at present the case.'

In his painstaking and well documented study based on official as well as non-official sources, the

author has revealed a penetrating insight into the country's political process. The book however is not one which does credit to the publishers; the type setting is uneven and the binding poor.

Urmila Phadnis

**STATES' FINANCES IN INDIA** By K. Venkataraman.  
George Allen & Unwin, 1968.

K. Venkataraman's is a civil servant's book, which is hardly surprising since he is a member of the Indian Administrative Service. It is competent rather than ambitious, descriptive rather than speculative, its preoccupations administrative rather than theoretical and averse to total solutions and suspicious of new-fangled ideas. (Venkataraman, for example, would not wish to be 'bogged down by concepts like programme budgeting and performance budgeting', the latter a notion that the Central Government is tentatively trying out.) One price-less sentence gives, as no amount of discussion will, a taste of the book's special flavour. Summing up the discussion on the pattern of Central assistance to the States, Venkataraman says, 'The dice seems to be *equally loaded* in favour of block grants on the one hand and more complicated pattern of assistance on the other.' When even sharp practice at the gaming table is done with such even-handedness, it is indeed difficult for bureaucrats to take decisions.

But the book has solid merits which should be listed straightaway. It seeks to give an analytical account of the finances of the States since independence, especially since the commencement of planning. In particular, it seeks to discuss the problems of transfer of resources from the Centre in the context of 'engineered economic development'. On this and other related questions, Venkataraman has provided admirable background material and some useful analysis. The historical background and the constitutional frame are briefly but adequately covered. (There is, however, a rather elementary error in a book otherwise factually impeccable on page 37 which assigns education and public health to the concurrent list of the seventh schedule.)

The whole gamut of federal financial problems comes under review in the subsequent chapters, Venkataraman is particularly good in clearing up some of the arcane mysteries of government accounting procedures. In the process he exposes some fiddling in classification since 1956-57 which tends to exaggerate the health of the revenue budgets of the States. (This change in accounting has also the effect of confusing comparisons over time). There is a succinct summary of the thinking of the four Finance Commissions on the problems of federal finance. This will particularly prove useful as a basis for further discussion of the institutional arrangements for dealing with problems of federal finance, especially the necessity for resolving the present dichotomy in the channelling of funds through the Planning and Finance Commissions. Venkataraman has also dealt



at some length with the finances of the State governments, though he evades some important questions like the enlargement of the States' resources.

The total picture which emerges from Venkataraman's account is the familiar one of the programme erosion of the original constitutional provisions under the exigencies of plan financing. Over the years, the Finance Commission, as has been repeatedly pointed out, has become less and less important than the Planning Commission as a dispenser of funds. Secondly, the changes in the relative importance of the constituent elements in a State's budget augurs such abject dependence on the Centre as to make illusory the theoretical near-equality of the States and the Centre.

On the other hand, at the political level, shifts in power, whether of the formal or the informal party political kind, have been such as to make the provincial capitals important—more important than New Delhi. This contradiction cannot be sustained for long now, although cross purposes *inter se* the States may delay anything like a confrontation with the Centre, at least on the question of federal financial equities.

Meantime, administrators can only look for administrative solutions and hope for 'commonsensical' compromises. And, yet, the scope for such adjustments is becoming narrower with every successive Finance Commission. As the Fifth Finance Commission is no doubt discovering painfully, there is little scope for transferring additional resources from the Centre to the States 'except to the extent that a general buoyancy of Central revenue increases the share of the States. (And this will owe nothing to what the Finance Commission does.) With 75 per cent of the income tax collections already turned over to the States, there is hardly any further scope for increase in transfers from direct taxes to the States. The Finance Commissions can at best tinker at the percentages of the Central excise duties to be transferred to the States, since the principle that all the excise duties levied by the Centre should be shared with the States (as against three of them in 1952-53) has already been accepted. Moreover, as Venkataraman has pointed out 'shared taxes as a whole have themselves been overtaken in importance by grants', which in its turn have always been less important, in terms of quantum, than loans.

As for the grants, the quarrel is mainly on modes of sharing among the States *inter se* and about the procedural tangles in which this largesse is enmeshed. On both these questions, a committee of the National Development Council has recently achieved a consensus, which though ambiguously worded—as on the criterion of deserving by one's own tax effort, for example—is an important and useful one. But it still leaves the question of the total grants open.

As for loans—perhaps the most unsatisfactory element in Centre-State financial relations—we have

K. Santhanam's recent computation that for the year 1968-69, the States would be nominally borrowing from the Centre Rs. 856 crores but after adjustments for repayments and interest due for the year, they will be left with Rs. 107 crores. In other words, we have here on a national scale the same predicament in which India finds herself vis-a-vis her international creditors. No wonder that the States lift their arguments on the question from UNCTAD documents and from the Government of India briefs to the Aid Consortium.

Plainly, on all these questions fundamental solutions can hardly be ventured by a civil servant, qua civil servant, though there is no reason why he should not do so as an expert. At any rate, K. Venkataraman does not think it his duty to do so. The nearest he comes to a fundamental statement is phrased thus: 'If one were to attempt to compress our arguments in this book into a single argument, it would be that the Central, State and local finances should be integrated and treated in such a way that each can play the role expected of it. In this sense, the problem of State finances is not one to be solved by sheer financial expertise or by accounting gymnastics or by discovering new sources of revenue. Ultimately, the problem of State finances has to be treated alongside the problems of politics and public administration and with a general sense of proportion. It is such an outlook on the part of the politician and the administrator that can make possible for them to come to grips with the problem...'

A peroration is, of course, not to be looked at too closely. But while one can readily enough agree that accounting gymnastics solve no problems, it is odd to be told that financial expertise and locating new sources of revenue are irrelevant. Indeed, granted a sense of proportion and exemplary politicians and administrators, these two would still be unexpendable. Locating new sources of revenue and making present sources yield more would be central to any realistic grappling with the problem of State finances. Indeed, one can go so far as to say that quarrels about the legalities and the equities of sharing resources raised by the Centre are becoming increasingly unreal and the Finance Commission's time could be better spent in locating additional sources of revenue for the States. The problem is basically as simple as that. As the Tamil proverb has it, you can ladle it out only if there is something in the pot.

N. S. Jagannathan

**STATE POLITICS IN INDIA** Edited by Myron Weiner,

Princeton University Press, 1968.

Foreign experts, like most of foreign doles, have been viewed in our part of the world with considerable amount of suspicion during the last

decade or more. And much of the apprehension seems to have been based on certain specific instances of their being used for causes not very sympathetic to the interests of India. Any new collaboration agreement signed, therefore, arouses as much of anxiety in many an enlightened Indian as does the publication of a new study by foreign experts.

The book under review does not certainly suffer from such a trivial handicap for the simple reason that editor Myron Weiner is among the more discreet foreign experts observing India. But the futility of it becomes obvious in view of the absence of minuteness of detail both in the style of discovery and the extent of the material surveyed. The study has grown out of a seminar in the United States held some seven years ago, according to the blurb; and, understandably, most of the observations made by the contributors to the volume are outdated and have not stood the test of time as is apparent from the political situation existing in the post-1967 general election structure.

The composition of the study itself suffers from many limitations so far as an appropriate area of coverage is concerned; for instance, how could a collection of eight States, mostly contiguous be the best sample for a study of socio-political trends supposedly differing in the intensity of regional aspirations?

Among the contributors, Paul R. Brass seems to have done the best homework in the State covered by him—Uttar Pradesh. But the fact is that he has repeated what has already been published as part of his researches leading to a useful book, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh*. But his emphases and the itch to reach quick decisions without an overall understanding of the area and the people's tendencies too are mostly misplaced.

One Muslim, according to Brass, who successfully contested an Assembly constituency on the Republican Party ticket in Aligarh (1962 general election) gave this reason for his disenchantment with the Congress in the post-1961 riots in the town and the adjoining areas:

'I continued to be a member of the Congress till now; but I found that the Congress was not playing fair game to the minorities and the downtrodden classes...justice was not done there and there was a report by some M.P.s which indicated this... Then, these riots spread and the Government did nothing to stop it. If the Government wanted to stop it, there would be no riots.'

To hasten to the conclusion that Muslims and Chamars entered into alliance because of their common bitterness for the Congress, based on the observation above, would be fallacious; for, those who know the politics of the area are also aware that the exact reasons for the said Muslim candi-

date's contesting the elections were completely different from what he describes as disenchantment with the Congress. It was a result of some messy politicking inside the Aligarh University following the unfortunate riots which somehow or the other had their origin in the campus. If Brass had cared to go into the actual details, he would have got them from any serious observer visiting the University after the communal disturbances.

Elsewhere he quotes a PSP MLA from Deoria district giving his reasons for bitterness for the then ruling party thus:

'(Most government services are) given to friends of the Congress, to the headman and important people of the village. Thus, we have to galvanize the support of those who are below the *chaudhuri* (headman). The traditional vested interests in the villages exploit the landless labourers and the common villagers. If the *chaudhuri* is a good man, we become weak. If he is a bad man, we thrive because of his evil and generally they are bad men.'

That soon after confiding this to Brass in an interview, the particular PSP MLA joined the Congress is a self-explanatory commentary on the actual political motives of such partymen. They have to be understood in the proper perspective of the situation in the villages and the people's actual motivations and not by gathering data in Lucknow or Bhopal for a well-printed study on India in some foreign country.

The other contributors to the volume have also relied mainly on the same tactics. Baldev Raj Nayar's treatment of the Punjab, however, is a better study of the local political movements and their consequences for the overall development of the area's future polity. That all of them could add only a short postscript to their actual papers (after the results of the fourth general election were announced) speaks for the limitations of the various papers.

Apart from Nayar, the choice of Balraj Puri, the only other Indian contributor, is unwise: for, Puri is known to be very actively involved with the politics of Jammu and Kashmir and he could hardly be expected to write dispassionately on the political trends in that particular State. No wonder he fails to go beyond the usual clichés that surround the discussion on Kashmir.

Even Weiner's survey of general trends in State politics has hardly anything new to say: he too goes into the generalisations that we so often hear from any ordinary foreign correspondent stationed in New Delhi. On the question of language, formation of the systems at the grass-root level, attitude of the bureaucracy and the like there is no new angle, no competent analysis and not even a serious attempt at some worthwhile discussion.

Anees Chishti

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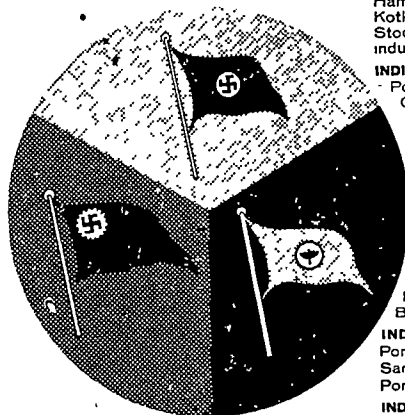
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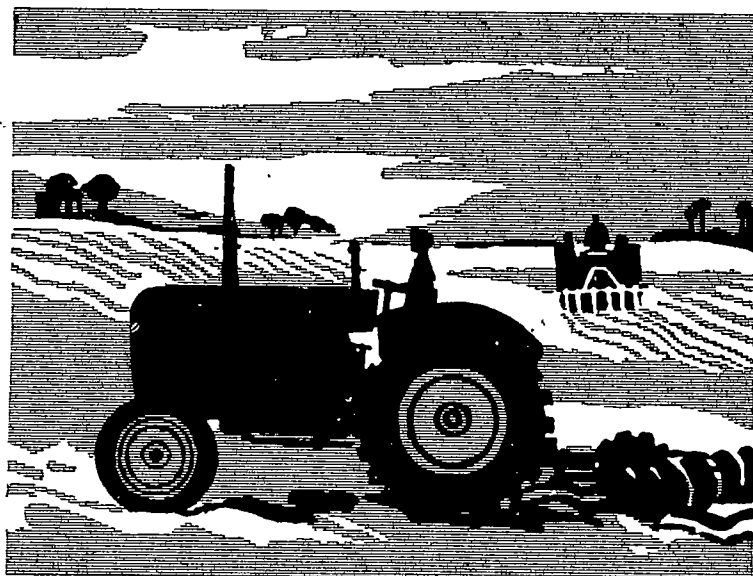
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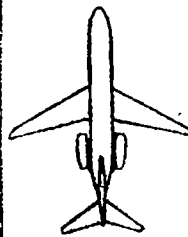
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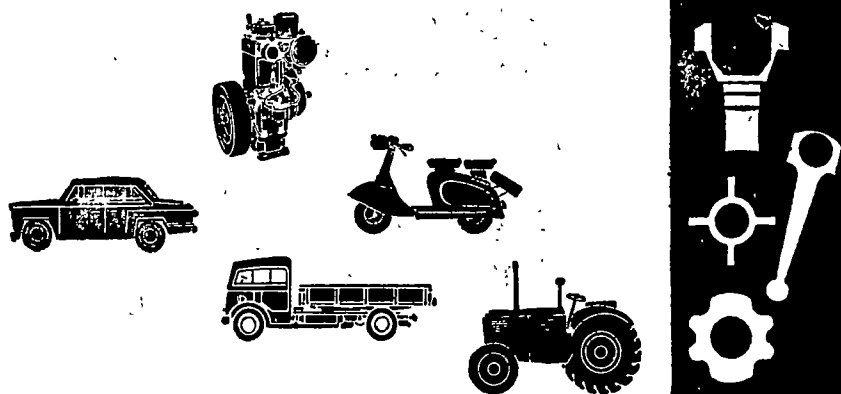
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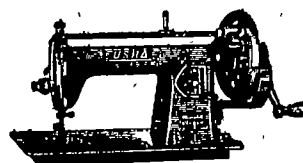
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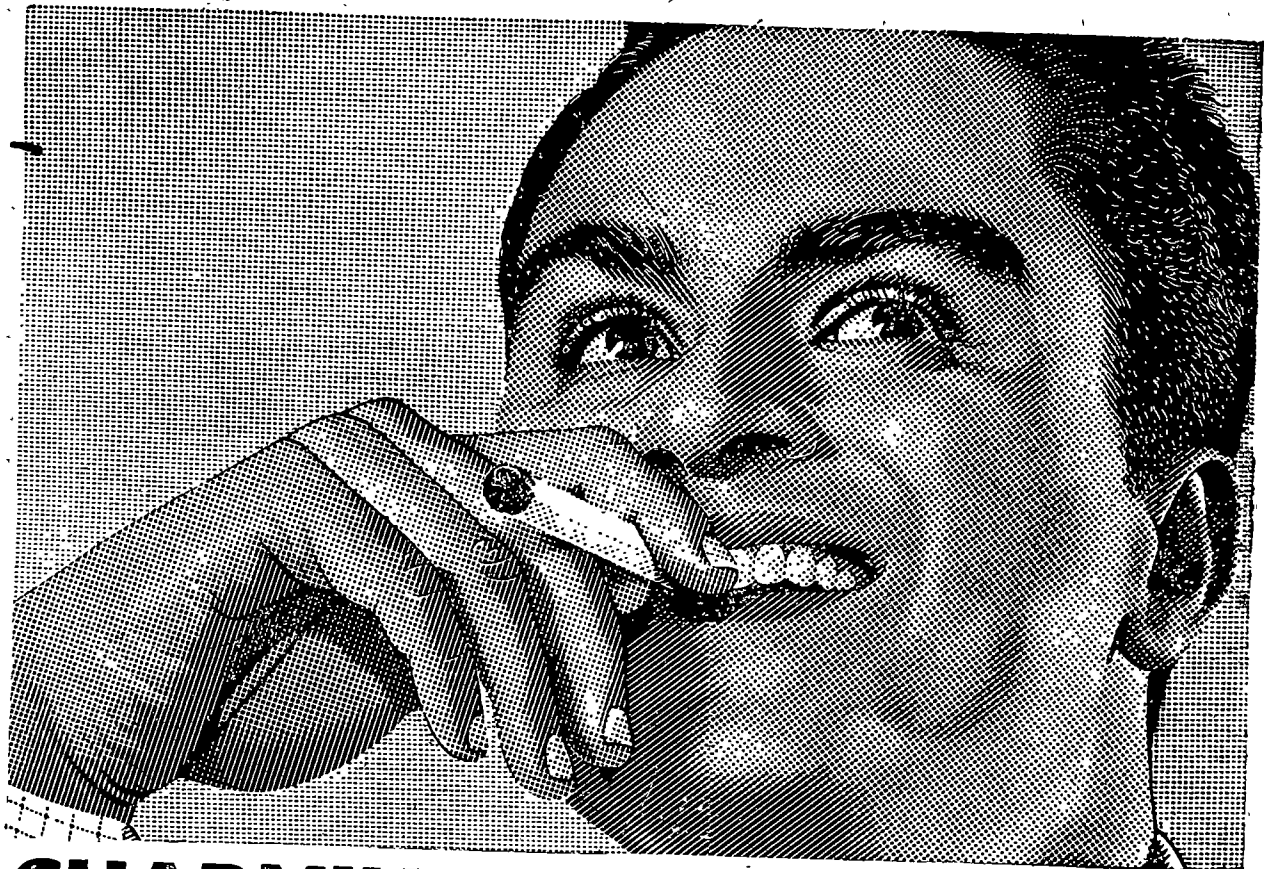


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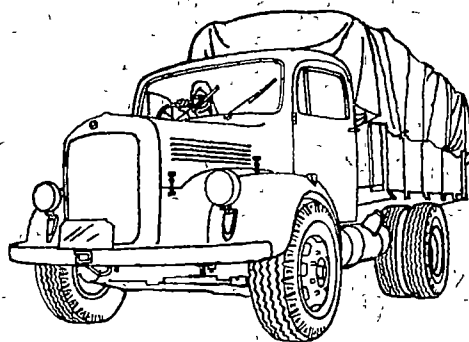
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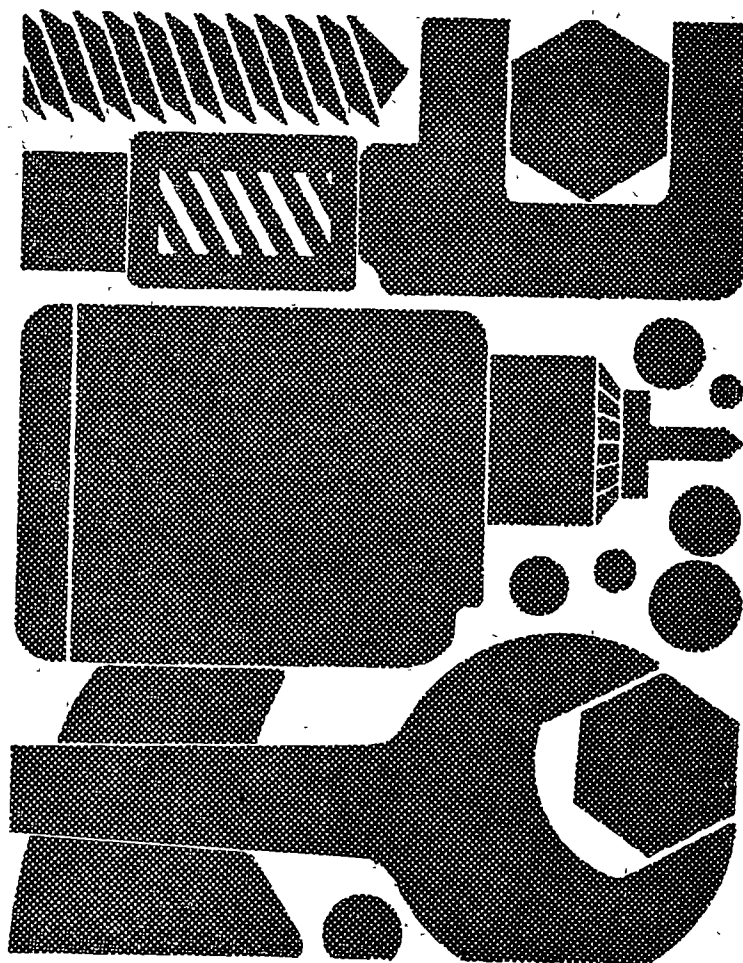
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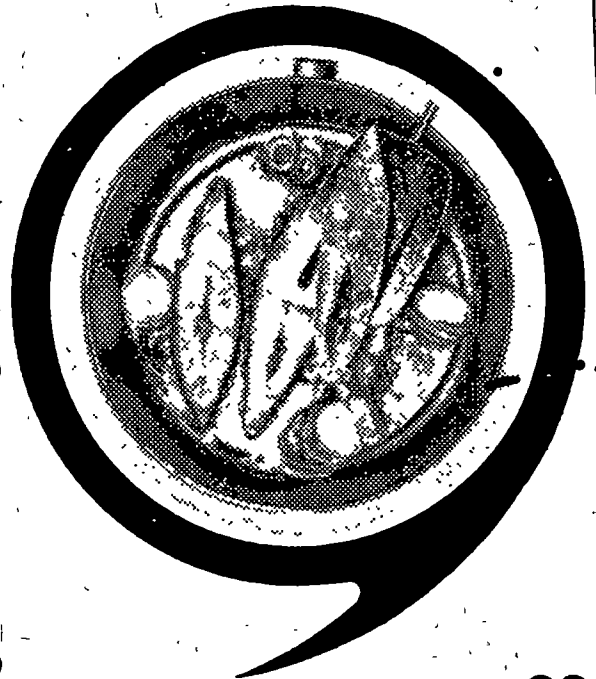
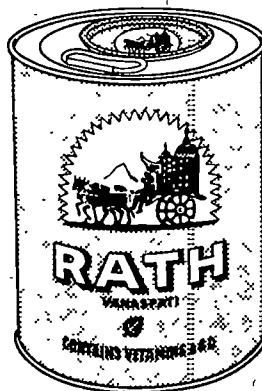
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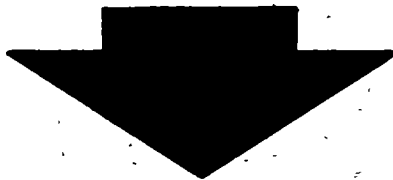
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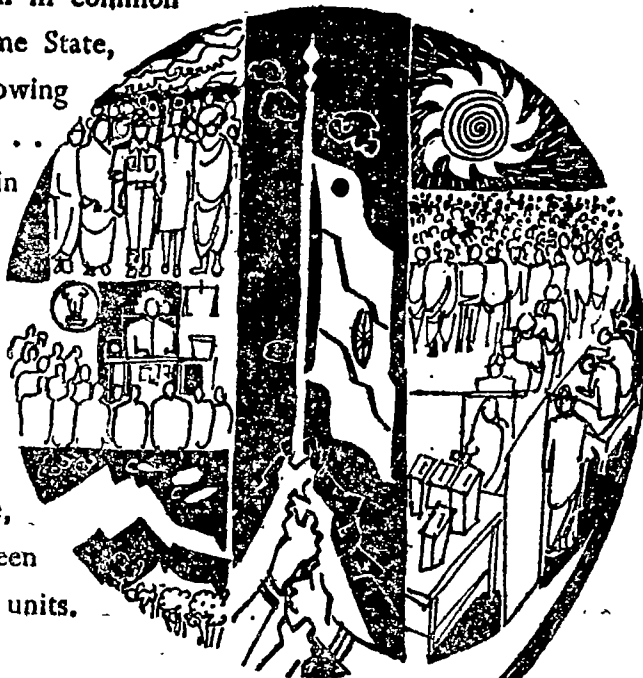
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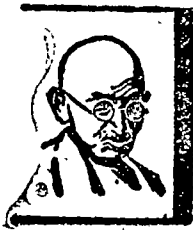


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## OUR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

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### COVER

Designed by **Dilip Chowdhury**

# The problem

IT may be worthwhile to begin this discussion by mentioning two considerations which should limit one's expectations from India's foreign policy. In the first place, it is necessary to realise that no nation, however powerful or resourceful, can hope to have an absolute or even an adequate control over the shape of its external relations. A country can neatly outline its goals and objectives and also draw up a programme of attaining them but its foreign relations are only partly determined by its own wishes or preferences in the matter. Much depends on the courses that other nations choose to follow, which in their turn can be greatly influenced by such imponderables as the health of a country's leader or the vagaries of its monsoon.

It is of course often possible to anticipate certain trends and events in the light of available facts; and foreign policy successes or failures are essentially a reflection of how far one's assumptions regarding the future are proved correct by the actual course of history. For example, all the major successes and all the major failures of India's foreign policy can be attributed to one right and one wrong assumption that New Delhi seemed to have made in the middle of the fifties. It correctly assumed that the military revolution of our times

and various other compulsions would make the two super powers control their rivalries and seek a *modus vivendi* for their co-existence. By lending its full weight behind that process India placed itself on the right side of history and reaped enormous foreign policy gains out of its action. On the other hand, it failed to calculate all the consequences of an East-West detente and assumed that while the cold war would be mitigated, the basic unity of the two blocs would remain unimpaired and there would be no structural changes in world politics. Hence its dual failure: to foresee the possibility of China's hostility towards India and to measure the extent to which Peking would be able to pursue an independent India policy without incurring too high risks.

The point is not to stress a failure of India's foreign policy but to illustrate the inherent hazards in any foreign policy exercise. It is necessary therefore to prepare oneself mentally for failures and reverses; it is also necessary to keep one's international stance flexible enough to adjust to changing realities and not to put all one's eggs into a single basket.

The second consideration which must be borne in mind is that India's role and place in the world in the coming decades will be determined



by what it does with itself and not by what it does with its foreign policy. It is not in any discussion of the future of the world order or the problems of world peace that the name of India frequently comes up today; it begins to loom large in the world's consciousness when food or family planning is the problem under review.

In many ways this image of India's sickness is unreal. It is partly a reaction to the equally unreal image that prevailed earlier of an India which has solved all its major problems of nation-building and was about to emerge as a major force in the world and partly a result of a peculiar Indian propensity to advertise its failures and underplay its successes. A more balanced view of India is therefore likely to emerge in the near future, but before it emerges India will have to register a higher rate of economic growth, impart a greater sense of national cohesion to its peoples and demonstrate more purpose and determination on the part of its elites to the outside world.

It is not difficult to identify the fundamental national interests that India's foreign policy must seek to promote. In the first place, the supreme objective of the Indian State is to build a nation out of its diverse peoples, achieve rapid internal development and bring about the country's social, political and economic modernisation in as short a period as possible. Whatever the ideology or the character of the Indian Government, it will have to pursue these goals with single-minded devotion and all its policies, including its foreign policy, must be directed towards this goal and must be conducive to better internal performance.

Secondly, India's foreign policy must seek to ensure the country's security and its territorial integrity and eventually build a structure of stable peace in the region to which it belongs. Thirdly, India has to try to maintain and promote world peace and contribute towards the creation of a world order which will not only ensure peace and security to all nations but also equity and justice to the underpowered and underprivileged members of the world community.

The problem is not to agree to such a vague formulation on India's national interests but to spell out what all this implies for the future of India's foreign policy. For one thing, there may be more than one plausible method of pursuing these interests; for another, some of these objectives may exert contradictory pulls over India's foreign policy.

To take the problem of India's internal needs as an example. It is by no means clear as to what kind of a foreign policy stance is most

conducive to internal development and there is certainly considerable room for controversy on this score. It can be pointed out by some that in this transitional phase of India's development it is most important for her to be able to draw upon other nations' surpluses to bridge the gap between her domestic savings and her minimum investment needs. This points to a policy of cultivating friendship with the developed nations of the world, particularly the two super powers, since they alone may be prepared to invest on a large scale into what may appear to lesser powers as the bottomless Indian pit.

Others can point out with equal force that the real need is to secure an early improvement of relations with India's neighbours; reduce defence spending and concentrate on the task of domestic development. A state of tension in the region hampers development efforts of all the countries, particularly of India which has the unique misfortune of having two hostile neighbours. A large military budget diverts resources to unproductive uses and also increases the country's dependence on others, depriving it of much needed leverage in dealing with its benefactors.

Advocates of this view can argue that it is wrong to define a country's territorial integrity to mean that there can be no reasonable adjustment of its boundaries; they can also point out that security is best ensured through peaceful relations with neighbours and potential enemies rather than by preparing oneself for a military confrontation. If there is a contradiction between the goal of good relations with neighbours and that of close ties with powerful external powers, the advocates of this view might prefer the latter at the cost of the former.

These are familiar arguments and have been repeated in one form or another in public discussions. But there are other considerations which might make the demands of India's internal needs on foreign policy appear a little more complex than one of either securing foreign aid or reducing defence expenditure. It may be wrong to regard the problems of India's development as a simple economic problem of finding enough resources to finance its development programmes; economic development has to be facilitated by the achievement of certain social and political goals within the country. For one thing, it is highly important to create a strong sense of national identity among the peoples of India and to create the necessary social changes that alone can lead to meaningful economic activity on the part of its peoples. It is also necessary to maintain political stability and sustain people's faith in the political system.

It is not impossible that some of these considerations might suggest a different foreign

policy course than what simple calculations of India's needs of external aid or reduction of defence spending might do. For example, an Indian decision to come to terms with her neighbours by making such concessions as would be interpreted by the people of India as a failure to safeguard the nation's basic interests and as might create a defeatist mood in the country could create a host of domestic problems, far greater in their magnitude than those created by the burden of an additional defence expenditure. It is difficult to convince 500 million people that they should hold together without being significant in international life; and national pride is as much a necessary condition for India's growth as is its capacity to invest capital.

What makes the situation even more complicated is that the very neighbours with whom an improvement of relations is to be sought are making the fullest possible use of this factor in their own national settings and there is therefore little guarantee that a particular type of Indian behaviour will produce a particular type of response from them. Thus, there is no simple answer to what India's internal situation demands of its foreign policy and the task is to balance the various pulls exerted by all these considerations and evolve a policy which will maximise the national gains.

Similarly, in regard to the problem of India's security and that of erecting a structure of stable peace in the region, there is no obvious or simple choice. It is possible to argue that the real source of instability and violence in the region is India's weakness; unless this is rectified, no meaningful attempt at co-existence with its anti-status quo neighbours is possible. Hence the pursuit of the goal of peace in the area over a long term requires a short-term Indian policy of acquiring adequate power to force its neighbours to lower their sights and give up their irredentist claims.

On the other hand, it can be said that unless some method is found at this early stage of a regional arms race in South Asia to resolve peacefully the disputed issues and create a climate of peace in the area, it might well get involved in an uncontrolled arms race for years to come. This will not only impede their economic development but also make them individually and collectively dependent on external powers, making peace and stability here a function of the wishes of nations whose stake in such peace can at best be marginal.

Finally, in regard to the wider issues of international politics there can be plausible

arguments in favour of entirely different foreign policy courses for India. It can be said with some force that the maintenance of peace in the world is still a major objective of Indian policy and that while the super powers have reached a minimum accord between them it is still necessary for powers like India to help this process and to raise their relations to a higher and more meaningful level of understanding and amity. The crucial issues of our times are whether the Soviets and the Americans will discuss an agreement to limit their arms race, whether they will jointly seek peace in the Middle East, whether they will both agree to utilise the United Nations and other agencies to create a better world order.

So far, India has helped them to discover areas of their agreement and has in fact made herself such an area in order to facilitate their efforts to maintain world peace. As against this, one might suggest that world peace in the sense of a Soviet-American agreement not to resort to war is already ensured by the balance of terror and it is no longer necessary for anyone to act as the high priest of a detente. In any case, India's contribution to this can only be of some symbolic value, if at all of any use.

The great issue today is not whether the world will be plunged in a catastrophic war but whether such peace as is ensured by the balance of the super powers' might would be adequate for the solution of the many problems of other nations. The problem is that it can easily lead to the creation of a world order of a particular type—where there is unconcealed domination of the small by the big; where local wars and conflicts are permissible while such wars as would involve the super powers are outlawed; where the fundamental problems of the world created by the North-South division tend to be ignored; and where the world has an international edifice that is concerned only with problems of international law and order and that evades the more fundamental issues of equity and justice among the nations of the world. Not only is such a pattern of stability in the world undesirable; it will certainly fail to last long. Hence efforts have to be made to create a more durable order in the world. All these considerations demand that India stresses the reformist rather than the peacemaking aspects of her international role.

The policies pursued so far by India have sought to promote the country's fundamental interests in a particular way which has resulted in a certain pattern of external relations. Even if no one consciously worked towards this goal, the considerations of her internal needs, the

requirements of her security and territorial integrity and her great interest in the promotion of world peace have all combined to bind India into a close and intimate relationship with the Soviet Union on the one hand and the United States on the other. This seemed to secure for her much needed foreign assistance, both economic and military, provide some guarantee of her security in the face of her hostile neighbours and last, but not the least, make a significant contribution to the all important goal of world peace.

Although it is a good question whether the convergence of Russian and American interests in the area has been primarily brought about by India's policies or whether they reflect certain changes in the global policies pursued by the two super powers, the phenomenon itself made India's foreign policy appear as a highly distinctive and successful one. It was no mean achievement for India to be able to be equally friendly with the Soviet Union and the United States when in many other regions of the world their attitudes are still divergent. What is more, in many ways this has served India's interests well.

The main source of a feeling of discomfort regarding this state of India's external relations is that along with its many advantages it has also meant a few distinct disadvantages for India. By its very nature India's relations with the Soviet Union or with the United States is a relationship between unequals and even if there is no conscious effort on the part of either of them to drive home this point, a degree of uneasiness about this within India is understandable. It is no easy task for any country to try to do good to others; in the very conception of aid and assistance is built in a status of inferiority for the taker and a status of superiority for the giver.

Also, it is unnatural for India to be identified too closely with the world's managerial powers. Its national traditions, its geographical position, its poverty and underdevelopment, the ethos of its elites—all exert various kinds of pulls on its international stance. In many ways, all these factors make it impossible for India to adopt a Maoist posture in relation to the World Establishment; but these also make it equally impossible for it to divest itself entirely of its role as a have-not power, interested in structural changes in world politics. It is the essence of India's problem that those very policies which once appeared as a major contribution to such changes now appear as an apology for a state of affairs that exists and that powerful forces in the world are trying to perpetuate.

Secondly, this pattern of external relations adversely affects India's capacity to pursue an

independent policy towards its neighbours. In regard to both China and Pakistan, there is a need to tailor its policies to the requirements of the two powers' global policies. At the moment, the interests of these powers require an Indian policy which works in different directions in regard to China and Pakistan. In the case of China, India's close links with them tend to inhibit friendlier relations; in the case of Pakistan they tend to force India to be more conciliatory than it might on its own be prepared to be.

But, the main problem is not that India's intimate relations with the super powers affect its policies towards its two neighbours in particular ways; the problem is that it cannot be sure that in case there is a conflict between its interests and those of the super powers in regard to the shape of regional politics it will be able to pursue those interests effectively. The very powers which may be interested today in preventing an India-China dialogue could well force it to enter into such a dialogue when their relations with China improve.

Similarly, what India should do in relation to Pakistan would depend on what Pakistan's relations with the super powers are. It is one thing for India to make an independent assessment of its policies towards its neighbours; it is an entirely different thing to be told at every stage what its policies ought to be. There is therefore a real need for India to acquire some new room for manoeuvre.

Improvement of relations with its neighbours is an obvious way of improving India's international position. But it is easy to exaggerate its significance and to think of radical changes in India's foreign policy on a set of naive assumptions. There are some, for example, who imagine that having resolved their mutual disputes India, Pakistan and China would be prepared to revert to Afro-Asianism and together play a 'revolutionary' role in the world. Apart from the fact that this is based on a complete misunderstanding of Pakistan's foreign policy, there is little evidence to suggest that even Peking is prepared for such a course. Behind its verbal onslaught on the world system, there have been clever moves to secure the best possible terms for China's re-entry into it.

It is wrong to assume that all that has brought about the India-China conflict is India's policy of getting closer to the two super powers; it is not impossible that, by ascribing this attribute to India's foreign policy, what Peking has really been trying to do is to convey to the two super powers that they must alter their

India policy as part of their preparation for an eventual dialogue with China. At any rate, ideas based on the belief that China's primary objectives are to bring about revolutionary changes in world politics and that her policies in the region are only incidental to these objectives are yet to be proved to be correct.

What is more important, even if this were true it would be neither possible nor desirable for India to renounce its world view in order to make itself acceptable to a 'revolutionary' China. India's world role is reformist rather than revolutionary and it would be as unnatural for her to wear the feathers of the revolutionary peacock as it is for her to dye herself in conservative blue. In any case, with its present internal set-up, its political system and its approach to economic development, such an option for India can easily be ruled out.

The problem of India's relations with its neighbours must therefore be viewed in less radical terms. It is important for India to be able to improve these relations, but it is not possible for it to seek such improvement on the basis of a total change in its world outlook or its international stance. Nor is it possible for New Delhi to go on making unrequited concessions to both its neighbours unless there is some demonstrable *quid pro quo* in the process.

This consideration makes it difficult for India to think of simultaneous gestures to both China and Pakistan; it is going to be politically unfeasible for any Indian Government to bear its cost. Hence, the all important question as to which of these two neighbours should India go more than half-way to befriend in order to be able to have a more satisfactory solution of its problems with the other.

One of the questions that come up in this regard is whether the Sino-Pakistan accord, often described in India as an alliance, permits such a policy of differentiation on India's part. The answer to it is perhaps 'yes', although it is a more difficult question whether Indian policy should be aimed at creating Sino-Pakistan differences or at taking advantage of such strains in their relationship as might otherwise develop. There is a lot that is artificial about Sino-Pakistan friendship; the position of the two States in relation to countries and issues other than India are too much at variance to permit the kind of arrangement that can be regarded as permanent or stable.

Pakistan is much more integrated into the international political system than perhaps any other State in the area; China is still very much the outsider in relation to it. Pakistan is conservative and distrustful of China's ideology; China is radical and committed to the goal of

a revolution in Pakistan, as much as in Burma or India. Pakistan draws its sustenance from the very powers that China is struggling against. But it is Pakistan's hope that this anomaly in Sino-Pakistan relationship will end soon and China will be establishing in Warsaw and elsewhere contacts with her adversaries and Pakistan's friends. Eventually, this would make it possible for China and Pakistan to demand jointly from the super powers a revision of the status quo in South Asia in lieu of their support for a new scheme of things in this part of the world—a scheme whereby three rather than two super powers exercise paternalistic influence in the area.

There is a lot to be said for an Indian policy of coming to terms with Pakistan first, in order to prepare the ground for long term coexistence between China and the sub-continent on the basis of equality, non-interference and mutual benefit. India and Pakistan belong to the same civilisation area, much as Pakistan might find it difficult to admit it. Pakistan is very much the smaller neighbour and its capacity to harm or hurt India is much less than that of China. The welfare of the people of India and Pakistan is interlinked in a much more obvious and direct manner than is that of the people of China and India. Finally, a policy of seeking an arrangement with Pakistan will be very much in consistence with India's broader external policies and in conformity with what its friends desire.

As against these considerations, there are equally forceful arguments for placing relations with China higher on the list of Indian priorities. For one thing, there is little of any psychological barriers on either side in the way of Sino-Indian friendship. For another, China is a more stable State with a more varied set of national goals and objectives. China does not need India's hostility as much as Pakistan does; it is not the sole objective of her foreign policy to harm India; the political pay-off from an improvement of Sino-Indian relations is likely to be much higher than that of improvement of relations with Pakistan; China's capacity to harm India is greater but so is its capacity to help it.

Again, should India be able to achieve a new basis of friendly relations with China, she will be projected automatically as a significant factor in international politics, because China may remain the major problem of world politics for years to come and the question of how to come to terms with it will remain an item on the political agenda of any consultations between other great powers. Finally, since any improvement of Sino-Indian relations now will occur without any form of super power participation in the process (unlike any improvement of

Indo-Pakistan relations) the political gains from it are likely to be much higher for India.

The problems of making a determined effort to improve relations with Pakistan are relatively simple to identify. In the first place, Pakistan's expectations from India are still very much higher than what India can be expected to concede. No Indian Government can afford to change the status of Kashmir; Pakistan is showing no signs of giving up its claims to it. Pakistan wants an externally enforced arms balance in the sub-continent in order to institutionalise a rough parity between India's power and Pakistan's; it is as unnatural for India to agree to such a scheme as it would be for the United States to agree to a balance between its power and Canada's.

Secondly, there is no indication as yet that a settlement of some of the disputed issues between India and Pakistan will in fact change the nature of Indo-Pakistan relations and help to establish a close cooperative relationship between the two countries. Pakistan's idea of an Indo-Pakistan settlement is that India should make some major concessions to it and that Pakistan will undertake no obligations of any kind as a *quid pro quo*. It expects external powers to underwrite such a settlement.

There are two types of arrangement possible with Pakistan: one, a kind of no-war no-peace situation, the stability of which is guaranteed by external powers; and, two, a more basic restructuring of Indo-Pakistan relations based on the assumption that for many purposes the interests of the two countries are identical and common. It is obvious that what India should be able to do to befriend Pakistan will depend very much on whether it is the first or the second type of arrangement that one is working for. While paternal powers may be able to stabilise Indo-Pakistan relations on the basis of a restrained cold war and competition in the area, they cannot expect India to bear any great cost to achieve an objective of such limited value to itself.

The problems of dealing with China are much more complex. One of the arguments against an early attempt to befriend China and restore normal relations with it, which has been forcefully presented by some able analysts, is that this might sow the seeds of mistrust between India and her friends and that whatever India does with China must be the part of an international response to the China problem. There are some valid arguments in favour of this position and they have been well stated before. But it is easy to carry this too far. For one thing, India cannot hope to prevent any other country from pursuing its own national interests when they seem to clash with those of India.

New Delhi cannot even be sure that while it conforms to the publicly stated China line of some of the great powers, they themselves will not be seeking opportunities of coming to terms with China.

Whether it is Moscow or Washington, one of the long term tasks of its foreign policy is to devise a basis of coexistence with China. A nuclear China will have to be accommodated into the world system and offered terms which are far better than what it could get earlier. China cannot of course hope to play Russia against America; the two super powers will do nothing in relation to China that may disturb their mutual relations. But they still have a common interest in accommodating China.

The problem of India is that the cost of an India-China settlement that follows a Sino-American or a Sino-Soviet dialogue is likely to be much higher than one which precedes it. If the Chinese should be ready to improve their relations with Russia and/or America, on issues of more direct concern to them, they may not find the friendship of either of them for India as an insuperable obstacle. Again, India can argue that just as the establishment of friendly relations between Moscow and Rawalpindi is in India's interest so is it in the Soviet Union's that New Delhi should be able to build her bridges with Peking.

This may not be appreciated in Moscow now, any more than the argument that Soviet arms supply to Pakistan helped India was appreciated in New Delhi, but the two cases are equally plausible. Whatever India does with China will not alter her basic friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union or her world view; the improvement of Sino-Indian relations will be a step towards the normalisation of Chinese behaviour in relation to the outside world; Indian influence in Peking will be used to soften its attitude towards the Soviet Union.

Finally, what attitude the USSR will adopt towards a Sino-Indian agreement will depend on the terms of such a settlement; unless a Sino-Indian settlement is directed against other powers, they have little to fear from such an eventuality.

But there are more serious problems. The critical question is whether China will respond to Indian gestures; the essence of the problem is not that either Moscow or Washington or both will be angry if India should be able to improve its relations with China but that India will find itself in a much more difficult position than before should the Chinese snub its attempt to befriend it. Thus, instead of adding to India's room for manoeuvre, any premature and futile bid to get friendlier with Peking may deprive

India of whatever manoeuvrability she now possesses.

What makes the situation difficult is that for New Delhi the question is a little more complex than one of determining whether a 'revolutionary' or a 'pragmatic' Chinese leadership is in authority within China. While the great powers of the world may find the end of Mao by itself a matter of great relief, the problem of India is different. Maoism unifies the rest of the world against it; a pragmatic China may decide to improve its relations with some powers in order to achieve certain results in the neighbourhood. Just as a 'revolutionary' China may feel so committed to the goal of an Indian revolution that it may do nothing to help its bourgeois leadership to get out of its 'crisis', a 'pragmatic' China also may decide that while readjusting certain other aspects of its foreign policies to the realities of the situation, it has a fair chance of maximising its gains in South Asia by pursuing its present policies.

This is not to say that India should take it for granted that, whether pragmatic or revolutionary, China is likely to remain hostile towards India and relentlessly pursue her anti-Indian objectives. As has been said above, China cannot hope to make a basic difference to Soviet-American relations by varying its attitudes to them; however seriously the Chinese might have meant their offer of coexistence to Washington, it cannot turn it against Moscow now any more than it could turn Moscow against it in the late fifties. Whatever they might do to improve their relations with China none of them can afford another cold war. Other considerations apart, sheer military realities will prevent a reassertion of the kind of Soviet-American rivalry that China might be able to make use of.

Inevitably, China will be engaged in a long and hard struggle to achieve a status of equality with these two powers; neither political, nor military nor economic factors indicate that it is going to be easy for China to reach this goal. Should it decide to tread this long road, it may be worthwhile from Peking's viewpoint to cultivate normal and good relations with a host of medium powers who have no interest either this way or that in the results of this Chinese long march towards a super power status. Italy and Canada, Australia and Japan are already showing signs of being prepared to establish economic relations with China and adopt a stance that is at best neutral in so far as the struggle between China and her adversaries is concerned—not neutral in the political sense, but in the sense that their relations with China are not likely to affect the outcome of this struggle.

It is perhaps everybody's hope that this grandiose vision of Chinese power will peter

out, leaving China as a sound trading partner. But the point is that while Peking may regard her relations with such countries as extremely helpful, they themselves regard these relations to be of such marginal importance for the Chinese struggle against the super powers that they see no harm in adopting such policies. None of these countries have any intention of turning against either Moscow or Washington or of seeing China successful in its pursuit of a super power status; it is Peking which has to be satisfied with mere economic relations with these medium powers and perhaps a slight political advantage that will accrue out of its good relations with countries of the intermediate zone.

For India the relevant questions are: is China moving towards such a policy? Will Peking be ready to deal with India on the same basis as it will deal with Canada or Italy or Japan? Should India regard herself as neutral in the struggle between China and her adversaries and can it afford to be indifferent to the course of that struggle? Is it not geo-politically and otherwise much more intimately concerned with this?

From China's point of view what happens to India is of much greater importance than what happens to Canada or Italy; India may not be in the intermediate zone in the same sense as those countries are. Perhaps the intermediate zone begins precisely where Chinese power can hope to have no direct impact on the course of international developments. The question of India's size, power and status is of much more serious concern to China. After all, it was India's effort to be equally friendly with China, Russia and America; if the Chinese opted out of this relationship in 1959 is there any evidence that they will now be prepared to enter into it again? If a Chinese Bismarck regards the disintegration of the Indian State as a major goal of his foreign policy, can India refrain from applying the same geo-political tests and working towards the limitation of China's power and influence?

Paradoxically, one reason for hope may be that the issue of the relative power and position of India and China has been almost decided in China's favour. Even in 1962 it was well known that China was far more powerful than India but it was still a question as to what the exact equation between them in the future would be. But since then China has been able to acquire modern weapons technology and make determined and rapid strides towards a sophisticated nuclear capability, while India has been able to borrow some conventional arms. By a combination of factors whose real significance only future historians will be able to analyse, India seems to have opted out of any kind of power competition with China. This has not only

removed India from the position of being able to make an independent contribution to the power equation in the world, it has forced on her the option of reverting to a search for easy and short cuts to international status.

The urge to come to terms with China is one manifestation of this. The Chinese, aware of this, may now deal with India in the confidence that it will indeed be neutral in so far as Peking's major foreign policy goals are concerned.

All in all, there are grave risks in any Indian policy of making an enthusiastic bid for improved relations with China, and the least that can be expected of the Indian Government is that it will display the required degree of caution in making any moves towards this objective. It must be realised that with all its disadvantages India at the moment has a stable pattern of external relations, which promotes its national interests in many ways. It is both possible and necessary to explore ways and means of making adjustments within the framework of this policy to mitigate some of its costs; but it is not difficult to be landed with a policy which is neither here nor there and which deprives India of credibility while making little contribution to her freedom of manoeuvre.

All that can be said is that if Peking is ready to normalise its relations with India without demanding any revision of the terms on which India and China had established friendly relations earlier, India should not be found dragging her feet because of a Parliament resolution regarding the sanctity of its borders. But this will require a change in China's policy, not India's.

The debate whether India can and should take any initiatives for the improvement of its relations with China and Pakistan is undoubtedly important but an obsession with this problem can inhibit the discussion of certain other ways of projecting India in a more significant role in the world, and of promoting her basic national interests. One obvious question is regarding the level and quality of India's own military power—a question that has been raised in SEMINAR before. If the answer to it is that India neither can nor should in any way aim at improving its present position in the world's power hierarchy, it is necessary for it to concentrate its efforts on bringing about such reforms as do not require a redistribution of power in the world.

There are two aspects of India's present international position which are of importance in this context. India belongs to the vast underdeveloped world and has a common interest with the other countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in reducing the gap between the

rich and poor nations of the world. In order to achieve this, they must together try to push the world forward to a more positive international effort in this direction. It is not the objective of any of these nations to challenge the present world system or to destroy it.

It is after all undeniable that the powers which are dominant in the world today still regard themselves as answerable to Jesus Christ and Karl Marx: if millions of Asians or Africans were to die of hunger or starvation the ghosts of Christ and Marx will appear before Nixon and Kosygin to demand an answer as to how they allowed it to happen. Unfortunately, the decline of ideology, both communist and non-communist, has made the approaches to world politics in the various world capitals much more cynical than before. The grave problems posed by the impoverishment of two-thirds of mankind or by the lack of social justice within a community are being increasingly pushed into the background by problems of 'crisis management'. In fact, issues which demand long term answers and sustained efforts on the part of the world as a whole have now been relegated to the powerless and insignificant agencies of the UN to resolve.

But approaches based on the cynical application of the laws of power can prove to be hopelessly inadequate for the purposes of building a viable world order, and the great powers must some day turn once again to the discussion of these issues. In fact, there is already a felt void in so far as ideas regarding the future of the world order is concerned. UNCTAD-ism is a half-hearted answer to a serious problem; more meaningful steps will have to be taken in the future if the under-privileged nations are to be dissuaded from concluding that no progress towards building a just order in the world is possible without some form of redistribution of world power.

It is the task of India and other similarly placed nations to help the world evolve such answers by articulating their demands. Part of the reason why the world seems to be highly indifferent to such issues today is that the process of demand articulation in these parts of the world has been greatly hampered by certain events.

The second aspect of India's international position from which it can derive some advantage is that it belongs to the category of medium powers, the delineation of whose role is perhaps going to be one of the important international issues in the coming decades. While the bipolar world has undergone many changes and the Soviet Union and the United States are no longer able to decide many of the world's pressing issues by themselves, the situation is one of modified bipolarity rather than one of



the types of multipolarity that existed before the second world war. Neither Britain nor France is any longer a world power of any kind though in some regions like Europe and Africa they are still important; even China may have to be content with the status of a regional power in Asia rather than that of a world power of some sort. It will certainly not be able to compete with Russia and America in all fields of military power.

What is more, all recent projections regarding the technological progress of various countries by the end of this century have indicated that the Soviet Union and the United States are going to remain far ahead of all others and only Japan may overtake them in some specific areas. In any case the differences between the three non-super great powers and a number of medium powers may increasingly become less and less. The recent financial crisis in Europe provided one manifestation of this trend.

The San Francisco assumption that five powers will be able to serve as the pillars of world order has now obviously become out of date. A more complex system will have to be evolved and various regional powers will have to be accorded a more important role than what they have hitherto been conceded. The two super powers cannot manage the world; nor can the five great powers do so. Hence the urgent necessity to involve a power like Japan in a greater role—a necessity which is now recognised in both Moscow and Washington. Though they may not be as great as Japan, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Italy, Germany, the UAR and some East European countries will surely play important roles in the regions to which they belong.

It is obvious that consultation and cooperation among these powers at this stage can be of much help for them individually and collectively. The use of this for India will be evident if it is remembered that what made it possible for New Delhi successfully to project itself in an important world role in the early fifties was the fact that it had secured the friendship of the major partners of the two super powers in the two alliances. In dealing with America, India's special relationship with Britain was of considerable help; similarly, the establishment of close relations with the USSR on highly favourable terms was made possible by the fact that India had already achieved good relations with Peking. The same experiment cannot be repeated today for obvious reasons. China is no longer a friend of the Soviet Union; Britain is no longer a partner of the United States in Asia. But the principle behind it is still valid.

The pattern of India's relations with the super powers will depend not on how far India

obeys or defies them. The limits of what India can get by meekly obeying them are now obvious; the risks of pursuing a policy of open defiance of these powers are also great. The problem therefore is not to agree or to disagree with them but to build relations with other important nations of the world in such a manner that they have to take note of it. It is also important for other reasons that the medium powers of the world should be able to share their experiences and to press jointly for such modifications in the world system as would protect their interests.

The problem is that one cannot deal with these medium powers on the same terms as one deals with the super powers now or used to deal with Britain and China in the past. While the super powers have no need to be told in advance what they can expect from India, the medium powers will have to be reassured in fairly concrete terms that friendlier relations with India will result in direct and tangible benefit to themselves. India cannot tell them: 'Ask not what India can do for you, ask what you can do for India'. They will do for India exactly what it is prepared to do for them. So far, India has mostly dealt with powers whose motivations are political rather than economic; it has waited for others to take the initiative in building relations with it and then responded to their gestures. If New Delhi is to diversify its international contacts, it will have to learn to manipulate its external economic policies to involve some of these medium powers in a close and intimate relationship with India.

The importance of using its external economic policies to serve its foreign policy interests has been recently demonstrated by India's successful attempt to rebuild Indo-Iranian relations on a new basis. It is apparent that India could think of many ways of establishing a closer relationship with Japan in the economic sphere; it is certain that eventually important political advantages could flow out of such a relationship. It is of some significance that one of the first acts of the USSR in its efforts to befriend Japan has been its decision to involve the Japanese in the development of Siberia on terms which appear to be very favourable to the latter. Both in trying to improve its relations with its neighbours and to maintain good and mutually beneficial relations with the super powers India may find that special relationships with some of these powers can be of considerable help. So far, India has successfully maintained such relationships with the UAR and Yugoslavia. How to establish such relationships with a few other countries is indeed one of the major problems of India's foreign policy.

SISIR GUPTA



# A broad framework

V. P. DUTT

THE effectiveness of foreign policy cannot be measured by temporary achievements and setbacks but by its ability to adjust to changing situations. What is expected of India's foreign policy—and its planners—is a measure of flexibility and resilience, a 'quick footedness' and a capacity to maximise the gains and minimise the losses in given situations. In addition, what we need is not only an intellectual comprehension of changes in the international scene but also quick adjustments to meet the demands of the new situation. It would be ridiculous to paint our foreign policy performance and effort in the blackest possible colours. Most countries in the world have faced grave problems and cannot claim any eminent success in resolving them. We have had our share of ups and downs. But what is worrying many thinking people in India is that India is slipping ground and our foreign policy has been

caught in the straitjacket of immobility.

India's foreign policy must have a framework, certain guidelines, a clearer conception of its objectives and goals and of India's place and position in the world. This framework has been lacking, or has been shattered over the last many years. Our policy has generally been ailing from the disease of *ad hocism*; it has given the impression of drift and uncertainty. No doubt, every country's foreign policy must in the final analysis ensure the country's security. So too with India. But that is neither here nor there. Security is not coterminous with military preparedness or the safeguarding of borders, although these are highly important tasks. It is possible to achieve both without a forward looking foreign policy. Even the conception of security changes according to your evaluation of your needs and expectations.

Any worthwhile framework for India's foreign policy must be

built on the premise—and the fact—that India is a country of five hundred million people, with considerable resources, raw materials, reserves and means. It should be obvious, without meaning any disrespect to the small countries, that India's role cannot be that of Cambodia or Laos. India is a large country and its history, geography and potential power rule out playing second fiddle to other countries. Our policies have to be varied and our responses complex. We are not just a status quo country, although there is no need for us to merely shout against and abuse the super powers. But just because we do not violently denounce the big powers or actively work for the disruption of the present status quo, it should not mean that we accept the idea of hegemonies or even super power dominance.

There are various ways of bringing about a more rational world order and for increasing India's leverage in international affairs. We are familiar with the Chinese method. That need not be our method. Independence without antagonism is entirely possible. It is in fact a necessary policy for India. The policy of friendship with super powers has served our interests and need not be discarded. But we must also work for independence without enmity. Perhaps at some stage it might have been possible to achieve a special relationship with one of the super powers, basing such relations not on a military alliance but on a frank, mutual assessment of the interests and requirements of the two.

#### **Soviet Union**

With the Soviet Union we have had particularly close relations for a variety of reasons, the most prominent of which were an absence of national irritants and a certain identity of interests in the context of the Asian situation. But the opportunity for a special relationship has been missed and the right psychological time has gone. The Soviet Union, with all good intentions, is heading down the same blind alley in which the

United States was so frustratingly caught in relation to the Indo-Pak sub-continent. For the time being at least, Moscow will not be deterred from its present course of simultaneous friendship with Islamabad and New Delhi in an even-handed manner and of maintaining some balance between the economic and military requirements of the two countries.

In any case, even while keeping peace with Moscow as well as with Washington, India will increasingly have to function on her own in future. In the present international situation, it is inevitable that the two super powers should increasingly try to find areas of agreement and a common language in their own interests, as well as in the interests of world peace. It is equally clear that this results in a certain imbalance in the world and that the two together can exercise irresistible pressure on other countries. In such a situation, heavy dependence on one power or on both of them can be fatal. The experience of the UAR should be an eye opener—what happens when a country becomes dependent on a big power. This proud, nationalistic country is today stricken with a creeping paralysis, immobilized, frozen into a benumbing stupor. It is not a situation of its making but the moral is obvious. The experience of dependence on the other super powers is even more pathetic.

#### **Relative Independence**

The only answer to such a situation for a country like India is to acquire the attributes of relative independence. By virtue of her size, resources, geography, history, past traditions and present experience, by any yardstick, our country is a major country in the world. From my experience at the United States, there is no question in my mind that India has an important role to play. Our role there as well as generally at the international level can be effective and constructive and it can also help redress the balance somewhat. Such a role will also be welcomed by many countries. Even now, despite the bipolarity of power

and our own limitations, we play no insignificant role. There is no doubt that on any major world issue at the United Nations, next to four or five major powers, considerable value and importance is attached to India's standpoint. Now that the countries outside the charmed circle of the big powers are discovering the need for mutual consultations and joint action, whenever possible, India can play an enhanced role.

#### **Psychology of Fear**

But it is essential to realize that there are certain requirements of an independent role. The psychology of fear must be totally shed and the hangover of the dark days of 1962 has to be fully overcome. The substance and the stuff of independence consists of the acquisition of some ingredients of power. To be power-mad is as dangerous as to be powerless—we have to avoid these pitfalls. It is in this context that I should like to advocate a careful reassessment of our nuclear policy. What we have to demonstrate is not our capacity to overkill but our capacity to acquire a few of the present basic ingredients of power. I do not believe in power for power's sake. I also believe that a touch of idealism and certainly of enlightened long term interest should temper a coldly realistic foreign policy. But we cannot get away from the fact that the chancelleries of the world still function on the facts of strength and power and that, therefore, the diplomacy of the weak is neither taken seriously nor respected.

Our people have lived with poverty in the past and it is not that alone which is at the root of the trouble. It is the loss of confidence in ourselves, in our future and our place in the world that is the disturbing factor. This pall has to be lifted and for this, apart from suitable internal policies, an increasingly stronger independent foreign policy is also important. The requirement of an independent role in terms of our domestic policies is now obvious and this is not the place for elaborating this

theme. Obviously, what happens to us inside the country is more important than, and will in fact determine, what happens to us outside. At the same time we cannot sit back twiddling our thumbs waiting for the good time to come within the country before we start moving in the international field. The world will not leave you alone, even if you want to. That is why we have to move simultaneously in both the fields and acquire a measure of strength and power.

### Independence

It should be plain that the process of relative independence from the super powers must be expedited. Independence is not tantamount to hostility and there is no reason why India must willfully spoil her relations with the super powers. If this framework is accepted as a valid one, and we begin phased action on these lines, I may immodestly suggest that even our problems with Pakistan and China may fall in place and not prove so intractable. The defusing of the conflict with one or both of them will be of immense value to India. Any movement in that direction, therefore, should be welcome. But we cannot, at the same time, let the wish be father to the thought; we have to make a careful assessment of the possibilities and of hard realities.

It is an unfortunate fact that both Peking and Islamabad proceeded on the presumption that India may disintegrate under the weight of her problems and burdens which they helped to pile up. Mao believes that he has generated sufficient pressures within the country to wait for the gathering of the storm. All that he has to do is to sit pretty and give a nudge here and a push there and this house of cards might collapse. Peking also decided to give assistance in arms and advice to the insurrectionist elements in our border regions adjoining China. Yao Wen-yuan (unconfirmed reports say he is Mao's son-in-law) said in a speech in Peking last year that the 'revolutionary situa-

tion' was ripe in India, that the peasants and the tribals were up in arms and on the march, that they were being increasingly guided by the thought of Mao Tse-tung and that the disturbed tribal areas which constituted a 'revolutionary base' were located near Chinese territory. The implication was obvious.

The price of reconciliation with China just at present may, therefore, be quite high. It may include not only the recognition of Chinese rights over Aksai Chin but also disengagement from the politics of the big powers and the acceptance of the pre-eminent position of China in Asia. However, situations can change rapidly and it should not be assumed that either our attitude or China's must remain immutable. The cultural revolution has revealed deep schisms in the Chinese leadership over both internal and external policies. Moreover, if Peking can forget about revolution in Pakistan and develop normal friendly relations with it, there is no reason why it could not do so about India too, once it felt that it would be in its national interest to do so.

### Chinese Posture

Recently, there are indications of a slight movement forward in China's foreign policy. The compulsions of the rapidly escalating conflict with Moscow and the possible end of the war in Viet Nam cannot fail to have some impact on Chinese policies. The threat from the United States has receded, and the quarrel with the Soviet Union has assumed menacing proportions. There is no immediate likelihood of any change of attitude towards us, but the long-term possibilities should not be ignored.

With Pakistan also the problem is that the maximum that India can offer is not the minimum which Pakistan would or could accept. The de-accession of Kashmir and its virtual integration with Pakistan is the minimum price at present for improvement of relations with Pakistan. Even

then 'friendship may elude us because there are other fundamental factors affecting, if not determining, Pak attitudes towards this country. This is not a price which any Indian government can afford to pay. Nevertheless, other possibilities should be explored and if a mutually satisfactory arrangement could be found, it would immensely benefit the people of both the countries. Above all, the channels of communication between the two peoples must somehow be restored. Let the windows be opened and let fresh winds blow. The difficulties are great and one cannot minimize the problems, but India should use every conceivable opportunity to encourage more contacts among the people. This is one case in which 'people's diplomacy' can help.

So, the question is not whether we should move in the direction of China or Pakistan in a process of accommodation but what the terms at present of such accommodation are likely to be. In fact, if the present framework is accepted and as India enters the threshold of greater independence and strength, our relations with the two neighbours will become more manageable. The stronger and more independent we are, the greater the chances of an honourable settlement with China and Pakistan would be.

The principal and primary pre-occupation of our foreign policy ought not to be relations with either of these two countries but our relations with Afro-Asian countries in general and Asian countries in particular. It is with these countries that we have to start moving. India's real hope can only be in a workable, viable and effective Asian-African policy which will enable us to resist pressures from either the super powers or the hostile neighbours.

### South-East Asia

The Prime Minister's recent visit to some countries of South-East Asia brought into sharp relief the fact, which many of us have been impressing upon the govern-

ment for some time now, that all the conditions were ripe for a meaningful Indian initiative in Asia. Both time and tide were propitious for an active Indian diplomacy in the countries of South and South-East Asia.

### Resilience

No doubt, Indian diplomacy has begun to show a degree of resilience which was absent for the last many years. We have begun to stir ourselves after a long spell of immobilization and near-paralysis and one hopes that the movement forward will be maintained. However, India must evolve a framework for a significant role, a set of priorities, short-term and long-term goals based on India's enlightened interests and the realities of the Asian situation.

I suggest that this framework should comprise an inner ring of countries whose stability, security, progress and well-being are directly and inextricably linked with ours and an outer ring in whose independence, growth and welfare we have a vital stake too. Inevitably and necessarily, in the inner ring are our immediate neighbours, chiefly Nepal, Burma, Ceylon and Afghanistan—and even Pakistan, for notwithstanding its hostility, the maintenance of the independence and progress of that country serves our highest interests.

In any case, towards this other group of countries we must adopt a policy of large-heartedness, understanding, generous cooperation, equality and an intimacy of relationship which subsists among the best of friends. We must evince and give concrete shape to our interest in their well-being and growth and interest them in our efforts and problems. Simultaneously, it should be our endeavour to keep down foreign influences in this region to the minimum extent possible.

The outer ring reaches out to South-East Asia which is also vital to our security, health and progress. What happens in Viet Nam and Malaysia and Thailand and

Cambodia and Indonesia is of direct and immediate relevance to us and affects our future as well as theirs. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we draw closer to these countries, encourage cooperation at every level and make every possible contribution to the furtherance of the independence and economic development of these nations. But at the same time we must be guided by an order of priorities, a set of goals and objectives and a sense of perspective and proportion.

### Three-Pronged Approach

Towards South-East Asia I would, therefore, suggest a three-pronged approach. The maximum and the most effective use of our relatively limited capacity to provide economic assistance can only be made on a selective basis, if we choose areas of concentration—possibly, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand. This would enable us to make an impression as well as serve the purpose of promoting economic and technical progress.

Secondly, while concentrating economic assistance on a selective basis, India must expand its political and diplomatic relations with a larger number of South-East Asian and other Asian countries. Conditions are highly favourable for India to broaden its contacts and relationship with a whole host of countries from Australia to the Philippines and from Cambodia to South and North Korea. To take another instance, we must reactivate our diplomacy in Hanoi, for Viet Nam, north or south or a united one, is potentially an important country of South-East Asia. It should be patent by now that neither North Viet Nam nor North Korea are appendages of Peking and it would be in our interests to establish greater rapport with them. Besides, trade can be expanded with a number of Asian countries with profit to ourselves and them and it should be our business to search for ways and avenues of such expansion.

Thirdly, a bilateral approach must be supplemented by a willingness to explore and push

multilateral arrangements. The promotion of bilateral relations with individual countries of Asia, based on an assessment of the possibilities and needs in each case, is necessarily an important function of our diplomacy. On an individual basis, there is need for regular consultations at various levels and exchanges of technicians, academicians, students, journalists and so on. But it must be realized that particularly in South-East Asia regional cooperation has become an urgent task. We must not drag our feet; we must also not show lack of enthusiasm for political and economic cooperation on a regional basis. We cannot, of course, throw our weight around but we can certainly show our readiness to be of help in promoting regional cooperation.

This task is directly related to a proper grasp of the short-term and long-term objectives and the realities of the Asian situation. What was the Asian situation until yesterday and which is still partially valid today?

### In Asia

The situation in Asia was marked by what appeared to be a titanic struggle between two giants—a nut-cracker-like movement in which all the other Asian countries faced the threat of being crushed between the two sides. On the one hand an Asian power, China, appeared to stride the continent like a colossus; on the other, a non-Asian power, the United States, was fighting to maintain its influence and holding the bridges. The balance in Asia was gravely disturbed and it should have been obvious that only an internal Asian effort could redress the situation and provide a new, viable Asian balance. Happily, a significant change is discernible on the Asian scene.

The constraints on China's power and its capacity for active intervention outside her frontiers are more apparent now and there is a more balanced appraisal of Chinese capabilities. American power in Asia too is in the process

of diminution and recession in Asia. The war in Viet Nam had distorted developments in Asia and its early liquidation is essential for restoring the balance. The Asian countries are finding their feet and are realizing the need for greater mutual understanding and co-operation. With the withdrawal of British military presence from South-East Asia, there is a fighting chance of strengthening the independence of the South-East Asian countries and preventing their involvement in big power conflicts. It was well, therefore, that the Prime Minister sounded the note of warning that the so-called power vacuum cannot and ought not to be filled by outside agencies and forces.

There is no real outside threat to most of the South-East Asian countries with the possible exceptions of Burma, Laos and Cambodia. The danger of internal subversion is another matter. If any of the governments of this region cannot put its own house in order, if it cannot deliver the goods and meet the urgent needs of the people, no amount of outside military assistance and alliances can pull it through and ensure its survival.

#### Salvation

The salvation of Asian countries lies in strengthening their independence, reducing external pressures and influences and coming together for mutual benefit. This cannot be achieved in a day; it can only be realised over a long period of time. But the effort must start, the first steps must be taken and the direction must be clear. The important thing is to get moving and to shed our inhibitions.

In Asia Japan is the only country which can claim membership of the group of advanced nations in the world. With its modern industries, technological development and high rate of economic growth, Japan is destined to play an important role in world affairs, particularly in Asia. It is a friendly country with a political system not too different from ours. Our present cordial relations with Tokyo can be further strengthened

and cemented. But we should not entertain illusions about a coordinated joint role in Asia by India and Japan, chiefly because Japan for the present is not interested in such a role. All the same, a greater effort in developing understanding at all levels is highly desirable in the interests of both countries.

#### Africa

Africa, it is acknowledged by all hands, is a crucially important continent in the world. On a selective basis we ought to strengthen both our political and economic relations. With our traditions of anti-colonialism and now a growing industrial base, the task is not too difficult, provided we are alert and on the look out for all possible opportunities. There is an obvious case for stronger, concrete support to the struggles in Africa, particularly those in South Africa, Rhodesia and Portuguese colonies. In addition we have often paid insufficient attention to economic relations—a lapse which ought to be rectified now. If I have not written more about Africa, it is only with a view to limiting the length of this paper.

In the new world situation, greater attention needs to be given to the countries of South America. Their friendship and their general support will be extremely valuable at the United Nations, and even outside. There are many important countries in Latin America, countries which are quite active at the U.N., countries like Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Columbia and others, to name only a few, and it is very much in our interests to activate our diplomacy in relation to these countries. In an Assembly of 126 nations, increasingly the smaller powers are beginning to find it necessary to work closely together in order to achieve a slightly greater leverage. Moreover, most of these countries entertain friendly feelings towards India and are showing evidence of greater interest in promoting close contacts. It is the right psychological time for meaningfully stepping up our activity and efforts in relation to them.

# No grand design

GIRI LAL JAIN

IF the most important point regarding India's foreign policy remains somewhat obscure, it is mainly because for some peculiar psychological reason the debate continues to centre on the question of the validity or invalidity of the concept of non-alignment. The point is that India can no longer hope to organise its international relations on the basis of a grand design.

Advocates as well as opponents of the concept of non-alignment shy away from this plain fact. The former hark back to the fifties when India played a mediatory role in Korea and Indo-China, set an example for other newly independent countries in Asia and Africa to follow in their search of an honourable place in the comity of nations, played a key rôle in the emergence of the third world of non-aligned nations and in the process won for itself a place out of all proportion to its economic and military strength. The latter continue to crave for participation in an anti-communist, or to be more specific, in an anti-China crusade.

It should be obvious that these conditioned reflexes bear little relation to the realities of the world situation. The world in the late 'sixties is strikingly different to what it was in the early and mid-'fifties and India could not now repeat the old performance even if it was not involved in a direct conflict with China, even if its economic performance was less uncertain than it has been for some

years and even if it was not pre-occupied with domestic problems as it is. Similarly, it is plainly ridiculous for anyone to suggest that the United States is still engaged in an anti-communist crusade, that it is possessed by the pactomania of the Dullesian era and that it is interested in building India into a military counterweight against China. Facts regarding American military aid to this country after the Chinese aggression in 1962 speak for themselves.

Nehru did indeed function on the basis of a grand design, the principal objective of which was to redress the world power balance in favour of Asia and Africa. Anti-colonialism, Afro-Asianism, neutralism and a generally favourable attitude towards the Soviet Union were at once expressions and instruments of that urge.

As he saw the situation, the United States had emerged from the war as the most powerful nation in the world and had inherited the rôle of the West European imperial powers. In his view, Washington was seeking to establish *Pax Americana* in the name of fighting communist expansionism. That the process was not a conscious one hardly mattered. The more relevant point was that irrespective of the rights and wrongs of the struggle in Europe, so far as former colonies like India were concerned the threat to their independence came more from America than from the Soviet Union and Communist China. He

did not see the danger in terms of direct occupation but of indirect interference and domination through defence alliances and so on. He felt inclined to befriend the communist bloc in order to be able to bring its power into play against America's. This is to simplify the thinking of an extremely complex mind. But this cannot be helped in a short assessment of this kind.

### New Era

Nehru was genuinely convinced that a new era had dawned in Asia and Africa, that the countries there could develop their own distinct personalities on the basis of their cultural heritage, colonial experience and nationalist aspirations and that they could co-operate intimately in cultural, economic and political fields in the interest of preserving their identity and independence and of increasing their bargaining power with the two blocs. In retrospect it is obvious that the late Prime Minister took a rather simplistic view of the process of modernisation in Asia and Africa and its political consequences. But it must be said in his favour that not a single important world figure showed better perception at that stage.

The Nehru design worked fairly well until about the middle 'fifties. Then it began to falter. The communist bloc was thrown into convulsion by Khrushchov's denunciation of Stalin, the Hungarian uprising and finally the Sino-Soviet split which became irreparable with the withdrawal of Soviet technicians and economic assistance in 1960. Internal divisions in Asia and Africa proved far deeper than suspected earlier. Most countries in the third world, including India, found themselves increasingly more and more dependent on foreign aid and advice. Not surprisingly, their leaders failed to master the highly complicated problems of modernisation, a process which touches every aspect of life. It began to appear that the heritage of the two continents was more often than not an obstacle in their march towards modernity and progress. The intel-

ligentsia found itself caught between the rival pulls of the culture of the former imperial powers and antiquated local tradition. The Chinese attack in October 1962 delivered the final blow and shattered the Nehru design. It cannot be put together again.

The detractors of the policy of non-alignment will, on the other hand, do well to recognise that the era of military interventions in Asia that began in America's foreign policy with the Korean war is finally drawing to a close. There can be no question now that President Nixon is determined to terminate the war in Viet Nam irrespective of the long-term consequences and that Washington will not embark on another anti-communist adventure in the foreseeable future. The tendency to deflate the Chinese danger has been growing strong in the United States and no one need be surprised at a pro-Peking shift in American policy. Such a change is bound to be facilitated by the awareness that the Sino-Soviet conflict indirectly serves the larger western interest and increases American options in dealings with Moscow. In short, it is fairly certain that Washington will in future seek accommodation with Peking and that its approach to other Asian countries will be influenced by this consideration.

### Low Posture

If the Nehru grand design has indeed collapsed and if the alternative of joining an anti-communist crusade is also closed, it follows that India has no realistic choice but to adopt a 'low' posture in international relations. But what does 'low' posture really mean?

First, New Delhi should not be obsessed by the notion that it is engaged in a competition with China for influence in South-East Asia. The indications are that the Chinese gaze is firmly turned inwards. But even if it is not so, there is nothing to suggest that they can carry everything before them. During the last two decades, issues have been thoroughly con-

fused because of massive American intervention and it will be some time after the American withdrawal from Viet Nam that it will be possible for New Delhi to make a firm assessment of the situation. India should seek to co-operate with countries of South-East Asia in the economic field but it need not be more zealous than them.

Secondly, it should be recognised once and for all that we cannot play a mediatory role between the two super powers, that our contribution to the solution of conflicts in which they are involved is bound to be limited and nothing is to be gained by getting involved in the Sino-Soviet confrontation.

Thirdly, New Delhi should not be too zealous to participate in international supervision arrangements in West Asia and Viet Nam though it need not shirk such responsibility as may be cast on it in the interest of peace and stability in the two regions of vital interest to it.

All this does not mean that India can be indifferent to developments like the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia and U.S. bombing of North Viet Nam, or that it can cheerfully accept the Russo-American duopoly. New Delhi should in fact define its position on such issues without equivocation. All that is suggested is that India's capacity to influence the course of events is strictly limited, that the country cannot afford to provoke the hostility of either super power in a quixotic attempt to force it to change its policies on issues of vital interest to it and that the growth of a *detente* and understanding between them is not contrary to its interests inasmuch as it helps to produce peace and stability.

### Regional Imbalances

This line of reasoning would have been unjustified if there was a chance, however slender, that the countries of Asia and Africa would be able to master their destinies and redress the power balance to some extent in their

favour in the foreseeable future. On the country, the prospect is that the gap between the rich and industrialised white North and the poor and predominantly agricultural non-white South will grow in the coming decades. Also, it will be a long time before the countries of Asia and Africa are able to evolve viable polities.

In this context, the Chinese concept of the world's countryside (agricultural South) surrounding the world's cities (industrialised North) and overwhelming it does not make much sense. The formulation may be relevant in the context of the struggle for power in Peking but not in that of the prevailing world situation. In any case, so long as the rulers in New Delhi do not share the Chinese view that they can spearhead a third force in opposition to America and Russia, it will be logical for them to maintain friendly relations and co-operate with them in stabilising the world situation.

The 'low' posture is not likely to be particularly satisfying to the national ego. But the lesson of recent history is clear. Leaders and regimes that have sought international laurels as substitutes for concrete achievements at home have gone down after having inflicted considerable damage on their countries. Only economically strong, technologically advanced and politically stable nations can achieve lasting influence in the world. India is not such a nation as yet.

#### China and Pakistan

The more immediate problems that face Indian policy-makers relate to China and Pakistan. Is it feasible to 'normalise' relations with either Peking or Islamabad or both? What can we do to break the anti-India Sino-Pakistani front? How real and immediate is the danger of military action by either China or Pakistan or both? To what extent can we depend on the super powers in such an eventuality?

On the available evidence India will have to learn to live with

these problems. But there is no need to despair. It cannot be ruled out that without abandoning its stand on Kashmir, Islamabad may gradually come to adopt a more conciliatory posture towards this country. It has been established during the recent turmoil there that hostility towards India does not really bind the various constituent units of Pakistan together. This and the likely shift of power in favour of East Pakistan hold out the promise of a less intransigent policy on the part of Islamabad.

#### Atmosphere of Siege

As for China, much will depend on the evolution of the internal political situation. So long as the dominant faction in Peking thinks it necessary to promote the atmosphere of siege, there can be little hope of an improvement in its policy towards India. Meanwhile, New Delhi should take care to ensure that it does not exacerbate the conflict by aligning itself with the Soviet Union. It should also prepare public opinion so that it can seize any opening that Peking may decide to provide at some point.

Beyond conveying it to Peking that it is not interested in gang-ing up with Russia or America or both against it, there is precious little that New Delhi can do to break the Sino-Pakistani front. But certain observations would be in order. China's and Pakistan's long-term interests are not identical. Islamabad cannot but be alarmed over the rise of Chinese influence in East Pakistan and Peking cannot be pleased over the developing Russo-Pakistani ties. The situation is complex and should not be unduly simplified.

If there is no room for complacency there is none for panic either. China has of late been at some pains to emphasise that it will respect the status quo on the borders so long as a settlement is not reached through negotiations. There is some reason to

feel that Peking means what it says although that need not prevent it from stirring up limited and controlled trouble from time to time.

Pakistan is not in a position to undertake a military adventure against this country. The reasons are well known. India has a decisive military edge over it and the new rulers are too preoccupied with domestic problems. The lessons of 1965 have not been lost on them. The brief war let loose forces which overwhelmed the Ayub regime on the one hand and destroyed the concept of a unitary Pakistan on the other. Another unsuccessful war with India might complete the process of the secession of the eastern wing.

#### Favourable Developments

The other favourable developments deserve notice. The backbone of the Naga rebellion has been broken. The importance of this development cannot be over-emphasised because it means that China and Pakistan have lost a major instrument for disrupting the Indian Union. Secondly, the pro-Pakistan elements in the Kashmir Valley have taken note of the fact that Islamabad's capacity to keep up pressure on New Delhi has been considerably reduced by the failure of the 1965 effort to seize the Valley, the overthrow of the Ayub regime and the emergence of powerful autonomy movements in East Bengal, Sind and the Pathan area. If these elements begin to function within the existing political system as they are expected to do, a big step will have been taken towards the normalisation of the situation in the State.

New Delhi has to be patient, firm and at the same time flexible. There is no short cut to security and peace. There can be no return to the 'fifties when the country took its security for granted and for all practical purposes ignored the essential task of building its military strength. But India is generally well placed to look after its defence and other interests.



# Internal health

O. R. SANGAL

FOREIGN policy is not merely a function of the economic surplus. As India has successfully demonstrated, it can also serve as a powerful instrument of economic development.

If we were to rationalize our experience of the past two decades it would appear that India closed

her option of having any other kind of foreign policy than that of non-alignment *and* friendship with both the power blocs when she resolved to industrialize at a forced pace but within the framework of a democratic superstructure.

As we look back at the recent past, we are today likely to ignore

the hazards implied in the course that India chose for her economic development. For one thing, there was no model from which she could learn. History presented only two models of development, both of which were barred to India. One was the imperialist way of development in which the necessary capital accumulation was achieved at the cost of dependencies and colonies. The other was the 'socialist' way of development in which the cost of development was extracted from one's own people, even if that implied the killing of democracy. India's choice of a third way which no other country had tried before—of development through foreign aid without either losing her independence or abandoning her democratic political structure—made it incumbent on her to secure the friendship of both the power blocs without surrendering her power of decision to either.

#### Balancing Act

This inevitably implied a certain degree of balancing one bloc against the other and even conducting a kind of 'spurious play' between the two blocs (as Stalin once described India's foreign policy). But there was no other way either to guard the country's independence or to get the necessary financial and technical aid from the big powers. For, India could not do without aid from either of the two blocs. The West had surpluses large enough to give almost unlimited aid to India. But the very structure of western economies prevented them from helping India in certain crucial fields like the development of basic and heavy industries. The socialist economies of East Europe, on the other hand, had no such inhibitions. They were willing to help India build her own heavy industry and thus lay the basis of an independent economy.

In this sense the aid available from the socialist countries had no *qualitative* limits though due to their restricted resources it was very much limited *quantitatively*. The situation with regard to the aid available from the West was

exactly the reverse. It was almost unlimited quantitatively but severely restricted from the qualitative point of view. India needed both kinds of aid and had perforce to walk on a razor's edge in trying to cultivate both kinds of aid-givers without losing its own power of judgement to them.

#### Determination

A foreign policy of non-alignment with the existing power blocs while maintaining the friendliest possible relations with them was thus a product as much of the determination of Indian leaders to safeguard the country's political independence as of their ambition to industrialize rapidly without liquidating the democratic political forms. Once the country's political-economic perspective was fixed, it could follow no other foreign policy. Even a change in the country's leadership could not result in any substantial modification of its foreign policy except in its forms of expression and the degree of finesse with which it was implemented.

And if only we would not allow our vision to be clouded by the difficulties of the moment it should not be difficult for us to see that in the main the policy has paid off. It has adequately served the purpose for which it was devised. Among all the countries of the third world which became independent after the second world war only China and India have succeeded in laying the foundations of an independent national economy. We may not yet have learnt how to make the optimum use of the base of heavy industry that we have built and in certain special fields China may have left us far behind by practically militarising her economy. But our record of economic development is nothing to be ashamed of. And this is a development of unique significance inasmuch as it has been achieved within the framework of a democratic superstructure and it has given our nation a resilience and a capacity of survival which few other nations

of the third world have so far exhibited.

The experience of the so-called 'national democracies' or 'revolutionary democracies' in the recent period is specially noteworthy in this respect. These countries—Nkrumah's Ghana, Soekarno's Indonesia, Nasser's Egypt, and Sékou Toure's Guinea—chose a different path of economic development. Opting in favour of radical social transformations introduced from the top they followed what may be called the classical socialist method of industrialization which paid little heed to the task of releasing the democratic initiative of the people. The results are before us. In comparison to their performance in adverse circumstances, India with its flabby, slow-moving, corrupt and inefficient multi-party democracy has stood up much better to both her humiliating military defeat at the hands of the Chinese and the economic aftermath of the Indo-Pakistan war.

#### Non-alignment

It is hardly necessary to labour the point that the Chinese aggression did not in any way invalidate our policy of non-alignment. At the worst it only invalidated that naive idealism which had persuaded us to believe that China just because it had turned socialist had also overcome her traditional 'middle kingdom' complex. In fact, it was our refusal to give up the policy of non-alignment even after the Chinese attack that helped us retain the friendship of the other giant of the communist world—the Soviet Union—and secure from her the military hardware necessary for the building up of our northern defences.

Then, has the end of the cold war, the increasing disintegration of the two power blocs and the gradual emergence of a duopoly of the two super powers, invalidated the policy of non-alignment? There is no doubt that the international context in which Indian foreign policy has to operate has changed radically in the last five or six years. As the Arabs have

learnt, it is no longer possible for the countries of the third world to play one power-dancer against the other except within certain very narrow limits. The danger of the two super powers coming to a headlong clash involving the entire world in a nuclear holocaust has more or less been obviated by the balance of terror. But there is a constant danger of the two existing super powers—USA and USSR—and the third aspiring super power—China—settling their mutual differences at the cost of the weaker nations. With the lessening of the tension between the super powers their willingness to help the developing nations has also become less. In short, the room for manoeuvre has considerably narrowed down for the developing countries, especially for India. Does this changed context require of us to abandon the policy of non-alignment or to practise it in a new way?

#### No Alternative

All criticism of non-alignment so far has been based on a wholly untenable assumption—that as soon as India would decide to align itself with one or the other power-bloc that bloc would be ready to receive the new convert to alignment with open arms. This assumption was not true even when the inter-bloc tension was at its maximum. It is much less true today when the leaders of the two blocs are more and more talking in the same language. The policy of non-alignment cannot be given up for the simple reason that there is no practical alternative for a self-respecting nation.

Also, it cannot yet be taken for granted that international politics would never again be shaped by a cold war between the big powers. The cold war between the USA and the USSR has practically ended, but a new cold war has begun between the USSR and China and it has the potential of creating all kinds of dangerous situations for the relatively weaker members of the world community who might be involved in it. Moreover, if today China threatens to upset the existing balance of power, in a

few years' time a similar challenge may be posed by some other countries, e.g., Japan or Germany. For a country like India which has deliberately, and perhaps wisely, chosen the slower, democratic path of economic development non-alignment is thus likely to remain a valid policy for a long time. Wisdom lies not in searching for an impossible alternative to it, but in practising it with necessary modifications.

Now it is clear that the policy of non-alignment as followed by India always had two essential ingredients. On the one hand, it sought to safeguard our independence of judgment; on the other, it tried to enlarge the number of our friends to the maximum extent possible. The emphasis during the past twenty years was naturally on the second aspect in view of our continuing need of economic and technical assistance. The essence of the modifications made necessary by the changed international context of our foreign policy seems to lie in shifting the emphasis to the first aspect and getting rid of our dependence on foreign countries as soon as possible.

#### Within Reach

A few years ago this might have appeared an unrealisable objective. Today self-reliance is within our reach. All the material prerequisites are ready. What is still lacking is the determination to achieve economic and military independence and the ability to create that moral and political atmosphere in which our people will be willing voluntarily to make the necessary sacrifices for it. If we can generate this determination and this ability, we are sure to break out of the present situation in which our foreign policy options seem to have been foreclosed entirely. If a nation's foreign relations are to some extent or the other always determined by its internal health, this was never so true for India as today. Once we throw away the beggar's bowl, resolve to live by our own resources and master the art of using the industrial base

that we have built during the past two decades, our foreign policy of non-alignment with power-blocs and friendship with all nations will acquire a wholly new quality and India will once again earn that respect and trust of the international community which she deserves on account of her size and record of achievement.

#### Driving Passions

Self-reliance, although a realisable objective, is not to be achieved easily. For one thing, it involves transferring both the benefits and the burdens of production from some social strata to certain others which is bound to meet powerful resistance from the vested interests. Secondly, the big powers also are not likely to look kindly upon India's effort to achieve self-reliance. But that need not discourage us. Big powers are certainly not paper-tigers, but as the events in Viet Nam and Czechoslovakia have showed they are not as all-powerful either as they pretend to be. A self-reliant India will not be friendless. Her foreign policy will not be oriented towards one or two super powers; and for this reason she will be able to take a more principled and more courageous stand on international issues and thus win the respect and support of a much larger number of nations.

As for the resistance of the local vested interests it could easily be broken up if our leadership knew how to identify itself with the two driving passions of our people—their national pride and their burning hatred for the rich. To assume that our people will always choose the easier path or that their enthusiasm can only be roused by offering them material incentives is to insult them. Let a government give back to the people their national pride and win their trust by distributing poverty (if it cannot yet distribute the country's wealth) and it will receive such powerful backing from the people that nobody, neither the local vested interests nor the big powers, will dare to obstruct India's march to self-reliance, i.e., to adult nationhood.

# Asian situation

ROMESH THAPAR

IN response to the options sketched by Sisir Gupta, let me begin by saying that we could not be in a more complex situation. We are today without any locomotive ideology, without a perspective which motivates and without any hope that these elements, essential to progress, will be forged or created or sparked by any of the actors of the Asian drama. We have to activate ourselves within this situation. We have to look for the pointers to this activation.

India and China, constituting a majority of mankind have fallen out over some minor border problems. China and the Soviet Union have also developed their own variation of a border problem. The tiny giant that is Japan, the third greatest economic power in the world, continues undecided about her subservience to the USA, whose shadow falls over the whole Asian continent. The countries of South-East Asia remain the 'warring area' between various

external powers, an area which expands or contracts depending on the degree of stability achieved.

The old-style ideological division between Right and Left has become markedly less relevant and is being gradually replaced by the easy, explosive attachments of nationalism and the balance of power they dictate, regionally and internationally. A whole range of new fears has been opened up: fears of the Soviet Union as a super power like the USA, fears of Japan's efficient, assertive presence, fears of China's dream of overlordship in Asia; and fears of India's response to such a prospect. Interlocked within this web of fear is the penetration into the Asian system of massive economic power wielded by external forces very often difficult to locate.

At the same time, it is becoming increasingly difficult to fuddle Asian opinion with the dogmas of the past—such as 'the battle

against imperialism', 'the struggle for freedom', 'an issue of sovereignty and human rights'. The war conducted by the USA in Viet Nam is seen by all as a naked attempt to hold the status quo in South-East Asia, even though it was dressed up as an anti-communist crusade. The Israeli-Arab clash is viewed as another attempt to impose external compacts upon Asia. The Soviet-Chinese tension is seen for what it is—the first trial of strength between two supposed ideologues who, while seeking the support of Asians, assert in fact their national interest. In other words, the arguments of power are replacing the arguments of principle. And here lies the grave threat to the future of our continent and the status of its recently freed nations.

### The Future

The entire power-political future of our world is fast changing. The USA and the USSR, enveloped by the cautionary logic of nuclear armaments, are compelled to blunt their rough edges and to move towards each other. Their national interests dictate an agreement broadly on spheres of influence. This agreement has the immediate effect of dissolving the sharp confrontation of ideologies. Another power with ambitions to be a super power—China—has sought to pick up the leadership of the communist forces, skilfully equating ideological banter with national interests. This non-conformism is matched by the widespread dissent in East Europe.

On the side of the non-socialist powers, a number of nations, individually and in concert, are not prepared to kow-tow to the American colossus. The European Common Market, particularly after the retirement of General de Gaulle, may see a new consolidation. Industrial workshops like Japan will move towards independent growth and alignment. In other words the old style division of the world into socialist and capitalist is no longer valid.

The impact of these developments on Asia needs careful assess-

ment. For so long Asia has been at war with itself. Some of us have argued that the war—or wars—have been imposed on us by the manipulations of the powerful. Others have shrugged this away and maintained that Asia as an entity is an illusion, that hardly any two countries have a feeling of genuine friendship towards each other. There is truth in both the positions taken, but I believe that the earlier cult of 'Asian Solidarity' which characterised the 'fifties, is again returning. The encroachments which the super powers are making on the independence and sovereignty of the free nations of Asia have persuaded the warring Asians to think of solidarity again. The conviction that the threat is neo-colonialism is spreading. And neo-colonialism cannot be fought single-handed. Allies are needed. In other words, Asia is turning around, as it were, to pick up abandoned threads.

### New Awakening

Let's make a rapid survey. India, long the meeting point of the two super powers, is beginning to react sharply against the pressures exerted on her. The cry for self-reliance will also become shrill and persistent. It cannot be ignored for long. And why should it be ignored? There is a growing realisation of the heavy and damaging cost of economic collaboration. Japan is also beginning to recognise that she cannot forever be tied to the strings of the USA, that she is a power in her own right, that there is indignity in the low posture, that she must improve her relations with Asia. Indonesia is in the throes of realisation, but has yet to find an organised voice. Pakistan is no longer prepared to be manipulated by a military clique and the present phase of supposed stability will probably be short-lived if the tension between the western and the eastern wings continues. South-East Asia is beginning to seek collaboration within its region now that the external military presence is withdrawing.

The earlier fear of being left to fend for oneself is slowly dissolv-

ing. The Koreans, despite the foreign presence, are moving to wipe out the dividing line between North and South. And in Viet Nam, which has known all the horrors, the demand is clear in both North and South: leave the Vietnamese to settle the problem of Viet Nam. There may be inhibitions, blockages, misunderstandings but I would make bold to say that these trends may help to clear the perspectives that have evaded us for so long.

To assist these processes is the task of a dynamic Asian foreign policy, a policy which will buttress the continent against the inroads of the super powers who wish to 'settle' the world in their mutual interest. Our policy must consciously oppose this kind of hegemony. How do we do it? Obviously we have to achieve a system of *panchashila* within the continent. Whatever some may say, *panchashila* is a revolutionary doctrine for it confines nations to national borders. Unless this is done, the smaller nations of Asia will forever tremble before the bigger nations—and will naturally keep open the option of inviting foreign assistance in the event of crisis. There are three nations in Asia who have to discipline themselves in the larger interests of Asia—China, India and Japan. Once they are brought within a certain discipline, it should not be impossible to insulate Asia from the depredations of the 'outsiders'.

### India's Policy

India, even though we say it, has really no desire to play an extra-territorial role in Asia or elsewhere. This is the established policy of our nation. It needs to be institutionalised, just in case others rise to project revanchist, revivalist claims on neighbours. This should not be very difficult.

Japan, fast emerging as one of the world's most advanced nations, is sorely troubled by the prospects of again becoming a 'power'. This involves military commitments—and these are sought to be shunned. An island people, dependent for their raw material on foreign

sources and sustained by their ability to sell their goods, the Japanese face a deep dilemma, but it can be resolved within a healthy Asian system of security.

### Normalisation of China

China the most populous of the three and the most ambitious very special problem. China's very special national and international objectives, her big power obsession, would have become impossible to contain if the two super powers had accepted the arrival of a third underdeveloped partner in nuclear blackmail. This was not to be, and China today finds herself in an impossible, though traditional, confrontation with everyone. Sooner or later, the situation will recoil on her. And probably Peking will seek normality with her Asian neighbours in an effort to salvage her dignity with the super powers.

We must assist the process of China's return to normality. Their ideological temper is not to be scoffed at, only the crudeness with which it is sought to be imposed on everyone. Normality would demand an abandonment of revanchist claims and the psychology of the overlord. Asians can assist the process by refusing to become parties to attempts to romanticise Maoist China. There is nothing to romanticise. A revolution has been turned into a coup. A military junta rules today over that great land and people. To turn Peking into the fountainhead of a mythical Maoism would be to encourage the dangerous nationalistic dreams of the men who rule China. We must bring China down to earth. This is not going to be easy, but it is essential for Asian security.

The normalisation of China would mark the beginning of a normalisation of relations with India and the emergence of India from the joint embrace of the USA and the USSR. The end of the confrontation between India and China would unleash a new confidence in the future of Asia, and Japanese opinion would be the

first to respond. It would turn away from the pacific regions and look more to the Asian mainland. Foreign policy must be gauged on the basis of such yardsticks. Normalisation must become a major slogan of the next decade in Asia if we are to survive as an entity in international relations.

Many notions are in the air. It is sought to give them institutional form. It is clear that even the super powers have to hawk the idea of self-reliant cooperation and growth even as they sell carefully organised 'traps' for the Asian nations. The Asian approach to genuine self-reliant cooperation should be at two levels. First within the Asian nations—a difficult proposition because economics are similar, complementary; second between developing Asian nations and advanced industrial nations which no longer aspire to extra-territorial rights and which, together, possess economic potentials comparable to the super powers. It is at these two levels that a great deal of hard work has to be done. Sensitive Asian opinion has to become discerning, sophisticated, flexible in dealing with the contemporary world.

### Security Psychosis

In this context, we have to treat with care and understanding the security psychosis in Asia. We have to explain in great detail how we became victims of this psychosis. It was something planted upon us by interested external powers. It has generated action and reaction of a kind that now Asian policy-makers tend to imagine that there is no way to cut the vicious circle. This is absurd. A phased military withdrawal by the external powers—through a skilful mix of compulsion, persuasion and outwitting—would create in its wake profound psychological changes in Asia. It would also encourage the working out of more comprehensive concepts of co-existence within Asia and between the nations of Asia and the rest of the world.

I have spoken of the necessary disciplining of India, Japan and

China. India and Japan are not averse to finding themselves part of a civilised system of continental relations. But even China, angry and insolent, still the unknown factor in any Asian debate on security, would willy nilly come under new disciplines. Those sections of Chinese opinion which oppose Maoist aberrations would be strengthened. Polarisations of various descriptions would dissolve and encourage a return to normality.

### A Dialogue

The misunderstandings and tensions inherited by and created in Asia during the first half of this century cannot be embodied in a dangerous status quo situation aided and abetted by the external powers. The nations of Asia will have to open a dialogue on all problems and to insulate these problems from incendiary influences. We have realised, after traumatic experiences, that the external presence in Asia distorts the dialogue by injecting into it the conflicting needs of the major powers. Very often, we allow ourselves to be motivated by 'threats' which in fact do not exist; they are the mirages of the political desert. This state of affairs must end. A policy which reinforces Asian sovereignty in Asia must now be consciously sponsored at various levels. This perspective has been slurred over in recent years and needs urgent restoration.

I believe that it is practical politics to create the sanctions for this new approach. Continentally, the people are in the mood to begin a major revision of their traditional concepts. The alternatives offered by the USA and the USSR, which compromise our independence and sovereignty, can be utilised to prod us into action. In other words, let us work out our regional security problems and not wait for the representatives of the super powers to organise us. Against this background, it is possible to move forward and to make the policy of non-alignment a potent weapon for a healthy, peaceful Asia.

# Books

**INDIA AND CHINA** By Sudhakar Bhat.  
Popular Book Services, 1967.

As soon as the popularity and stability of the communist revolution on the mainland of China became an accomplished fact, it was realized in New Delhi that, to a very great extent, the peace and stability in Asia and in the whole world would depend on the course of India's relations with China. The pre-eminence attached to this twin objective of peace and stability in this region along with the perception of the threats to it, which emanated in general from the contemporary world situation characterized by the ideological confrontation on a global scale, led to the earnest desire of ensuring

friendly relations with China, which found its manifestation in the policy of 'peaceful co-existence'. Needless to say, this could have been the only sane policy in the context of China, not only because of its geographical proximity, but also because of the differences in the pattern and level of the social, economic, military and political developments. Yet, the fact remains that India's policy towards China during the last two decades has served no purpose except that it has illustrated that the way to hell is paved by good intentions, particularly when there is an inherent disregard for the objective reality.

The history of Sino-Indian relations, as narrated by Sudhakar Bhat, is characterized by a swing from

professed amity to armed hostility. According to the author, this swing cannot be explained entirely in terms of the Sino-Indian boundary dispute and it must be viewed on the one hand against the background of the changes taking place in the Tibet region of China and our attitude towards them, and, on the other in terms of the Sino-Soviet dispute and Indo-Soviet friendship. This approach has the intrinsic merit of putting Sino-Indian relations in the continually changing pattern of international relations and bringing out the intimate relation between the stray events taking place at different points of time and space.

To begin with, it is essential to recall the phase which was characterized by slogan chanting such as 'hindi chini bhai bhai', mutual exchange of cultural delegations, and active cooperation in Afro-Asian and Non-aligned conferences, convened for the purpose of invoking and affirming faith in those five principles, setting the code of conduct which the nations were supposed to observe in their mutual relations, which have earned the label of 'Panchsheel', only for want of any other term.

Looking at it in the light of subsequent events, it would appear that it was a masterpiece of double-dealing, organized hypocrisy and charlatanism. But, if one indulges in this sort of branding, one is sure to miss the wood for the trees, because there are some observers, who believe that Chou was not wearing any mask at Bandung or at Belgrade. But, then, there were some genuine differences of opinion, arising necessarily from the different social and economic backgrounds of the nations and resulting in differences of priorities and methods to be used for them. It is easy to parade these differences in a manner in which the social and cultural similarities going back to historical antiquity appear to be of overriding importance and the present objective reality stands dwarfed, but it is very difficult for the nation as a whole to appreciate a different system, epitomizing a particular view-point, based on different historical experiences, in case of clash of interests.

It is necessary at this stage to remember that the entry of the Chinese army into Tibet was deeply regretted by the Government of India. So much so that 'friendly and disinterested advice was tendered', which obviously irked the Chinese as they believed Tibet to be an internal part of China and considered the misplaced emotional zeal of Nehru to be an unwarranted interference in their internal affairs. Then, there was the revolt in Tibet and the Dalai Lama sought asylum in India. Although it would be naive to imagine that it has anything to do with the Chinese invasion, yet it did provide a pretext to some extremists in China to pressurize their government to adopt a more militant anti-India approach.

The events moved at a much faster pace during the three years preceding the final showdown.

Frequent armed clashes occurred all along the border, the language of the protest notes acquired an unprecedented sharpness which indicated the hardening of attitudes. Public opinion got enraged and the 'pressure groups' found an opportunity of discrediting the policy of the government, which responded by dropping hints of resorting to military means, of course, earnestly believing that, in fact, the necessity would never arise. Before this chain could be reversed, large-scale fighting broke out for which both the army as well as the country was certainly ill-prepared. The military reverses in Ladakh and NEFA and the unilateral imposition of Chou's proposal in the form of the ceasefire declaration generated a bitterness which was never known before.

It was in this atmosphere that the various proposals were put forth with the purpose of bringing about a negotiated settlement of the so-called boundary dispute. Although, there was hardly any possibility of breaking the deadlock, yet, the Chinese interpretation of the 'Colombo Proposals' did some good, at least so far as it revealed the hollowness of their claims. For some time, China insisted that the negotiations could begin only if India accepted 'the actual line of control' of November 7, 1959 and India countered this by suggesting restoration to pre-September 8, 1962 line (the crucial difference between the two lines is confined to the western sector, that is, the plateau of Aksai Chin).

On October 13, 1963, *The People's Daily* editorially said: 'There is no longer any room for negotiations between the two sides'. It is a matter of common knowledge that India has stopped insisting on any pre-condition to negotiations and also there is no indication of any serious thinking on the lines of recovering the lost territory, either by diplomatic or by military means. But there is nothing new in it. All through, as against any serious thinking we have found comfort in wishful thinking. This runs mainly on the following lines.

First, there are some who believe that the Chinese always had a 'grand design' of dominating the whole of South-East Asia, and the idea of 'Himalayan Federation' including Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh and NEFA is only a part of that whole. Although it is for the future to issue a verdict, yet on the basis of the scanty evidence that is available at present, it can be safely concluded that this is a gross exaggeration. It is necessary to remember that (1) China has friendly relations with Burma, Afghanistan, Nepal, Cambodia and Pakistan, (2) China has accepted that its boundary with Sikkim has been 'formally delimited' and the Chinese have never violated it, (3) in November 1962, the Indian army expected an outflanking movement through Bhutan but the Chinese scrupulously avoided any violation of the



Bhutanese territory and (4) according to some well-informed sources Chinese interests lay exclusively in Aksai Chin. Thus the denouncement of the 'expansionist tendency' of China in terms of the 'grand design' is by and large misplaced.

Secondly, some people are of the opinion that China's hostility towards India is a function of the Sino-Soviet dispute, which in its turn is explained in terms of the U.S.-Soviet *detente*, 'after nuclear confrontation in Cuba' and Indo-Soviet ventures. In the name of clear thinking, let it be recalled that it was pointed out in Pravda's editorial on October 25, 1962 that the McMahon line was unfair and illegal and Chou's proposals were quite reasonable. A few days later, Khrushchov dismissed the Chinese insinuation against India of invading China, questioned the propriety of the Chinese military moves and pointed out 'that there was no boundary dispute which could not be solved without resorting to arms'.

There are two fine points which deserve to be mentioned, indeed emphasized. First, the Soviet Union condemned China's resort to arms alright, but it has nowhere conceded India's contention pertaining to the Sino-Indian boundary. This can be substantiated from the maps showing that part of NEFA and Ladakh which is claimed by China as Chinese territory (World Atlas, 1967, USSR). Secondly, it must be remembered that the original sin of Khrushchov against the ruling elite of China was to suggest that war as a means of settlement of disputes has become outmoded. Incidentally, that has been our sin also. It is when in this background, the similarity between the Sino-Indian and the Sino-Soviet boundary dispute is viewed, the inescapable conclusion which emerges is that China is deliberately creating tensions all along its borders. The compulsions for this, perhaps, lie in the sweeping changes taking place inside China and the concomitant tensions.

In the light of the above, it becomes obvious that the chief architect of India's foreign and defence policy, Nehru, faltered on this very score when he dismissed the possibility of a major Chinese attack because of its internal pre-occupation. The hope lies in realizing the external implications of the changing internal situation in China and not in romanticizing the appearance of the Chinese diplomats in formal gatherings.

Ved Gupta

**INDIA AND WORLD POLITICS** By Michael Brecher. - Oxford University Press, 1968.

This fascinating dialogue owes itself to a series of tape-recordings made by the author between November 1964 and May 1965. Early in 1966, Krishna Menon edited the completed draft of the dialogue. Together with the author, one regrets the fact that Menon found it necessary to omit or soften some of his more forthright judgements of men and events, but

this has not altered the main thrusts of the dialogue. Nor has this diminished its value for observers of the Indian political scene since independence. Critical of autobiography for the reason that it distorts reality, Menon is forthright with Brecher in the way he was not with T. J. S. George, his biographer. 'I never provided George with any material nor did I encourage him to write this book. I have given much more to you in these talks.' Yet, Menon was not pushed beyond a certain point. He consistently refused to talk about the 'lease' idea (Menon's reported idea of a lease of Aksai Chin in Ladakh in return for a Chinese lease of Chumbhi Valley). 'There may have been all sorts of ideas' and, not infrequently, 'Oh, that is a professor's view.'

The book forms part of Brecher's forthcoming larger work on India's foreign policy system. The underlying point in Brecher's paper is that the elite image constitutes the key to understanding and predicting probable choices in foreign policy. By an analysis of frequencies, attitudes and factors, his paper has attempted to examine one important decision maker's image, and to predict behaviour on specific issues. Brecher is interested in Menon because of the latter's unique place for fifteen years (1947-62) among that small coterie of men who made foreign policy decisions—unique because of his intellectual and emotional link with Nehru, of his place in Nehru's inner Cabinet, of his role in India's Commonwealth decision, and of course because of his responsibility in the confrontation with China in 1962. In attempting a study of what such a key figure thought, and why, Brecher is out to establish a closer tie between attitudes and events. More particularly, he wishes to develop 'the kind of research which is now essential and possible if the study of foreign policy is to progress beyond the bounds of historical survey.'

The dialogue extends over a variety of subjects—Non-alignment, the Commonwealth, Suez, the U.N., Goa 1961, China 1949-62, Pakistan, succession to Nehru, the Indian Cabinet at work among others. On non-alignment—'There were two blocs. Both the Prime Minister (Nehru) and I exclaimed or thought aloud, *simultaneously* why should we be with anybody?...—and again—'non-alignment is not a bloc...and that is why, when some people say, "Why haven't all the non-aligned people stood up and shouted against China," I tell them, they have their own policy, they have their own independence.'

On Menon's China policy, Brecher is firm—Menon's image (shared by Nehru) was widely at variance with Peking's real posture towards India. The gap continued until it was too late (1962). Menon was surprisingly naive about decision-making in China's political system: 'I cannot imagine that a man who appeared to be so sensitive to argument (Chou En-lai) would be the Prime Minister of a country that invaded India'. But when Brecher says 'Even as late as 1965 Menon revealed strong traces of his inaccu-

rate perception of China's intention towards India, one feels Brecher has his elemental psychology all wrong—for even in 1965 Menon may have felt the emotional necessity to stand up to a policy that had led to his resignation as Defence Minister in 1962.

Concurrently, Brecher establishes the point that all along Pakistan was enemy No. 1 in Menon's mind; that while China was out to embarrass, perhaps dislodge Nehru, she could not gobble India as Pakistan would like to do. Towards the U.K. an ambivalent attitude, caused in part by the London School of Economics/Laski attachment, friendships with men who helped shape the climate of opinion for what Menon would consider were Britain's 'finest hours'; attachment too for certain values of the British way of life. Towards the U.S.A. specially intense hostility, exemplified in his attitude to Galbraith—'He regarded himself as a kind of super ambassador, like an old-time British Resident of an Indian princely State. At no time have I come to a worse conclusion about anybody I have had to deal with—largely because he was so ignorant.'

Brecher sees a high correlation of images and policy choices in Menon's case. This gives him hope. 'If we can uncover the images of decision makers we can project likely policy acts'. This is part of his general objective 'to make the study of foreign policy a rigorous discipline'. But herein lies the flaw. Uncovering images rests squarely on the assumption that the dialogue is frank and uninhibited. Surely a dialogue can also be used to mislead? Fascinating, Mr. Brecher, but over-ambitious.

Navin Chawla

**INDIA'S DEFENCE PROBLEM** By S. S. Khera.  
Orient Longmans, New Delhi, 1968.

**HIMALAYAN BLUNDER** By Brigadier J. P. Dalvi (retd.).

Thacker and Company, Bombay, 1969.

With the publication of *India's Defence Problem* by S. S. Khera and *Himalayan Blunder* by Brigadier J. P. Dalvi (retd.), particularly the latter, sufficient details about India's defence apparatus and how it functioned or failed to function, have at long last become available to permit informed analysis of what really went wrong and why it did so. Whilst there is room for difference of opinion over the causes and the cure, there is none whatsoever for apathy or indifference over the necessity for informed public debate on questions having a vital bearing on the nation's security. For the successful functioning of democracy, enlightened public opinion is essential so that the pressure it brings to bear on government is based on rational premises and not on mere emotional responses.

S. S. Khera, a former Cabinet Secretary and Principal Defence Secretary, has no axe to grind.

His long experience as a senior ICS officer, the position of high vantage that he occupied in Delhi's corridors of power and the scholastic detachment with which he appears to write gave rise justifiably to high expectations that his book would furnish an authoritative and unbiased version of the fateful events of 1962. Unfortunately such expectations were sadly belied.

The book sets out to describe India's defence apparatus and how it has functioned since independence, and although the author bemoans the fact that few people in India knew anything about the subject and that 'a sort of veil of secrecy was all too often drawn over matters of defence', he does very little indeed to remove the veil or to provide any concrete facts or new information significantly to enlighten public opinion either on India's defence problem in general or regarding the causes of the NEFA debacle. Instead he largely confines himself to vague generalities and with numerous rambling asides seems to miss the bus.

No such inhibitions are evident in Brigadier Dalvi's graphic and forthright description of the way in which the country's defence apparatus functioned. As Commander of 7 Infantry Brigade, Dalvi and the troops under his command were at the receiving end and bore the first brunt of the massive assault that China launched from the Thagla Ridge. Though he has made no bones about what he considers to be the main causes of the debacle or over pinpointing the mistakes that were made as well as those responsible for making them, he has not done so with any apparent vindictiveness, nor has he tried to blame his subordinate commanders or troops. He has, however, convincingly marshalled evidence to rebut responsibility attributed to him by General Kaul for the militarily totally unsound deployment of the main elements of the brigade in 'the tactical death trap' in the low ground along the banks of Namka Chu. In his incisive analysis Dalvi time and again hits the nail squarely on the head and goes on to hammer home his point by drawing apt analogies from military history and the principles of war. He also debunks the notion that no one ever warned Prime Minister Nehru of the danger from China, by publishing the text of a remarkably clairvoyant letter which sardar Vallabhai Patel, shortly before his death, addressed to the Prime Minister.

Khera disclaims any intention to pass judgement or to condemn any one and says, 'my endeavour in the course of writing this somewhat summarised book is to list the events and circumstances that appeared to my mind relevant to the security and defence of India, and significant for peace between India and her neighbours.' He then summarises what appear to him to be the main causes of India's failure in NEFA in 1962, and lists them as being: unpreparedness of India to withstand an onslaught over the Himalayas; the state of affairs in Defence Minister

Krishna Menon's field of responsibility; the marriage of convenience between Pakistan and China; real and wide margins of ignorance and uncertainty about the situation in the Aksai Chin area and over the McMahon Line including lack of information about the intentions of the Chinese, their objectives, their plans and their preparedness; and finally the performance of the military chiefs—and although he does not actually say so, he implies that there were failures and shortcomings on their part.

After an extremely superficial discussion of the causes, Khara arrives at the conclusion that although not enough men, weapons and equipment were provided, the best use was not 'made of the resources available to the military chiefs for deployment in defending the country from attack and aggression'. He further adds, 'if more equipment had been provided, probably more would have been lost, and the total damage to the nation's defence, and the economic and social fabric might have been greater.' The author makes no attempt to substantiate these conclusions by either citing how the resources might have been put to better use, or who in particular was responsible for the failure to do so. By leaving it vague, he encourages the assumption that the fault lay with the military commanders alone. Whilst the author's failure to delve into the military picture could perhaps be justified on the plea of lack of competence, it is difficult to understand why he failed even to mention the role that the Defence Committee of the Cabinet played or failed to play.

Another very strange omission is any discussion of the 'Forward Policy' which probably was the cause of the whole issue between India and China. It is absurd to argue as Khara appears to do, that since the standing orders of the government lay down that the function of the Ministry of Defence as being, 'the Defence of India and every part thereof etc.', and that since the safety of a part of India was not insured ergo, the blame must rest with the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces. Surely a former Cabinet Secretary cannot ignore the fact that the overall responsibility rests on the Cabinet, or at least its Defence Committee, who after obtaining the assessments of their intelligence organisations, their military and foreign policy advisers, must assess the threat or threats confronting the country and clearly specify in sufficient detail each task assigned to the armed forces.

It is also surprising that anyone with the author's background should fail to draw a distinction between China's objective capabilities and subjunctive and more nebulous intentions. Intentions may often change, but capabilities cannot do so suddenly. The recent report of the Aeronautic's Committee gives the impression that even today adequate steps are not being taken to make long term assessments of likely threats.

Dalvi has confirmed what most informed observers

already realised, namely, that all concerned from the Prime Minister in Delhi to the Brigade Commander in the field were fully aware that the Chinese, who had inducted large numbers of troops into Tibet in the 1950s and had built up a network of roads right up to the Indian border, were in a position to deploy and maintain in the vicinity of the border far greater military strength than India, could possibly hope rapidly to muster over its immeasurably worse lines of communications. There was thus no room for doubt about China's superior capabilities. The only point in doubt was China's intentions and to what extent, if any, she would react to India's 'forward policy' which amounted to moving troops forward to the vicinity of the border and establishing small posts in areas which China claimed to be her territory, and where her troops were already holding the dominating features.

Since India's leaders had never contemplated aggression from China right up to 1959, the defence of this border had been completely neglected, and even after this, only half-hearted attempts were made to remedy the position. In view of the attitude adopted by China and the tactics she employed of nibbling at our territory on the border, there is without doubt justification for the establishment of what, in fact, amounted to flag posts to establish our claim to the area. Whether the manner in which this was carried out was correct or not may be open to argument. There can, however, be no dispute over the fact that the decision to adopt the 'forward policy' was a political decision taken at the highest level, and accepted or at least not adequately resisted by the Chief of the Army Staff and the Chief of the General Staff.

It is also evident that, in the light of the knowledge of China's superior military capabilities in the area, the fact that the terrain favoured her and that it was far easier for her to increase her build up, this high level decision could only have been based on non-military considerations. There obviously prevailed in Delhi a disastrous notion which seems to have become a fixation that the Chinese would do nothing big. How else can one explain the way in which publicity was given to General Kaul's appointment to command the task force which was to evict the Chinese from Indian territory. How else can one explain away the keeping vacant during this critical period the vital appointment of CGS after General Kaul vacated it. It is beyond the bounds of credibility that even the most incompetent commanders, if they thought a major Chinese attack was remotely possible, would have committed such criminal blunders in elementary tactics as to leave the vital ground (which had specifically been appreciated as such) around Towang virtually undefended and, to deploy 7 Brigade in the low ground which became the Namka Chu death trap.

Dalvi's book is a study in depth revealing a profound understanding of not merely the military

aspects but also of the overall policies and postures which led inexorably to the debacle. One cannot but be forcibly struck by the burning conviction which motivates the author and his determination to expose the mistakes made, so that similar disastrous courses may never in future be followed. One must salute the author for his excellent work, and endorse the exhortation that Frank Moraes makes in his foreword to the book, to every Indian capable of arriving at an independent decision to read *Himalayan Blunder*.

Rathy Sawhny

**INDO-SOVIET POLITICAL RELATIONS** By Maya Kulkarni.

Vora & Co., 1968

**INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS** By Harish Kapur and others.

Popular Prakashan, 1969.

Reaction to Soviet overtures of friendship to Pakistan seems to have upset Indian calculations. Public reaction has ranged from bewilderment, though less in intensity than in the case of disillusionment with China, to disappointment with India's foreign policy, as a whole. As usual, the analysts are catching up with the task of explaining this shift in the Soviet interest in South and South-East Asia by analysing the Soviet policy objectives and their implementation since India's independence in 1947. Maya Kulkarni's work on Indo-Soviet political relations highlights the period since the Bandung Conference of 1955, while the short collection of articles by Harish Kapur, etc., reflects the opinion of a very articulate and staunch anti-Soviet section on more recent developments.

The remark in Kulkarni's book that communist ideology is attractive to the underprivileged nations, can, however, be further explained. The under-privileged nations are faced with the problem of closing the economic gap between the developed countries and themselves. The enormity of the task demands the greatest amount of cumulative effort, an acute sense of commitment and willingness to discard the old traditional mode of living, on the part of the masses. In this context communist ideology is viewed as a short-cut to the modernization of the old order. The alternate model of mixed economies fed by foreign development funds is also keenly watched by these countries. But these alternate models have not so far achieved the calculated rate of economic growth necessary to maintain faith in the system. This has been the greatest snag in the efforts of containing Communist influence in the under-developed world.

Other projections in the book regarding foreign policy objectives of the Soviet Union, India being within the natural geographical sphere of influence of the USSR, geo-strategic importance of India, her utility as a bulwark against China, are all quite tenable. The United States' defence alliance with Pakistan

and the rising tide of India-China friendship activated the Russians to discard the Stalinist distrust of the bourgeois governments of India and Pakistan. Khrushchov's advocacy of peaceful co-existence, uninevitability of war and the varieties of the dictatorships of the proletariat accentuated the Sino-Soviet rift. In Sino-Soviet rivalry, China appeared to be on firmer ground in the beginning. The underdeveloped countries could more easily identify their problems with revolutionary and developing China than with the Soviet Union which had already attained big power status. The distrust of the super powers was the main reason for their reluctance to respond fully to the early overtures of friendship from the USSR. This has been noticed by the author. The visit of Khrushchov and Bulganin greatly facilitated the growth of Soviet involvement in South and South-East Asia.

The author attributes the Soviet Union's growing friendship with Pakistan to an effort to stem the tide of growing Sino-Pak relations. The end of the very special relationship between India and the Soviet Union has synchronized with the similar ending of the special relationship between Pakistan and her allies. The development of the new weapons systems has to a certain extent diminished the value of overseas bases. This has diminished the bargaining power of the allies vis-a-vis the super powers. Good relations with Pakistan enhance the effectiveness of Soviet presence in settling the outstanding disputes in the region. According to Kulkarni, the Soviet Union is not likely to develop relations with Pakistan at the expense of India. This only means that the Soviet Union would not like to strain relations with India on a more or less permanent basis as she has done in the case of China. This does not rule out a major crisis in Indo-Soviet relations. The role of the Soviet Union during the India-Pakistan war of 1965 has been very ably dealt with in the book.

In contrast to the academic treatment of the subject in the first book, the second, a short collection of articles, is a severe indictment of the Soviet Union and all that it stands for. The first article by Harish Kapur is, however, an exception to the general tenor of the book, in so far as it points to the doppler effect in Indo-Soviet relations in a comparatively dispassionate manner. He attributes the increased Soviet involvement in South Asia to the virtual stabilization of Soviet influence in Europe leaving hardly any scope for a diplomatic headway in that sector. As against this, the situation in Asia offers an opportunity for further aggrandisement of Soviet influence in this region. As regards Soviet military aid to Pakistan, to this reviewer, it is necessary to look into the possible motivation of all such aid from the super powers. Apparently, arms aid is given to keep up the strategic balance in the region. In this context Soviet arms aid to Pakistan to some extent reflects the Soviet reading of Indian military capability. This is not to suggest that India has no cause for concern on this account because, for plausi-

ble reasons, India would seek to maintain an edge over her smaller neighbours.

Masani's article on relations between India and the USSR after the Czechoslovak crisis reflects the anti-Soviet feelings which swept this country during those months. However, belonging to the rightist opposition, his salvo of invectives is as much against the Congress as against the Soviet Union.

Thus, his criticism has not only proliferated into an outright condemnation of communist countries but has given him an opportunity of swearing by the inherent goodness of the United States of America. He supports American intervention in Viet Nam and refuses to equate it with the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia on the ground that the former was in response to an invitation from a legal government. As to how many persons this legal government of South Viet Nam represents does not bother him.

Further, hardly any one would agree with him when he says that it would have been better if there was a clean 'guillotining in Czechoslovakia which the whole world would understand.' His observation of Mrs Gandhi's cautious stand on the Czechoslovak crisis that it was merely her satellitism is also not justified. His concern on depending too much on the Soviet Union for the supply of military hardware would draw appreciation but due to the non-availability of certain sophisticated items elsewhere this dependence is bound to continue for some time.

Gorwala's article echoes the anti-Soviet sentiments of Masani and advocates against Indo-Soviet cooperation in any field whatsoever. A. G. Noorani rightly focuses attention on the cartographic lapses in Soviet atlases, showing certain parts of India belonging to China. His treatment of the Soviet Union's stand on the Kashmir problem is, however, biased. The Soviet delegate's statement in the Security Council which according to Noorani suggests that Kashmir is a live issue cannot be rejected outright. India's own impression. Pai in his article warns against dovetailing of Indian plans into Russian plans. This is understandable, because dovetailing of Indian plans into any outside pattern is bound to distort plan priorities and cause severe imbalance in the economy. Any attempt to integrate Indian economic development with the world monopolistic capitalist structure is to be similarly avoided.

This collection of articles can at best be taken as the dissident view of India's policy of economic and political cooperation with the Soviet Union.

D. C. Sharma

**THE INDO-PAKISTANI CONFLICT.** By Russel Brines. Pall Mall Press, London, 1968.

Russell Brines, a seasoned journalist, has, in this 481-page volume, which he prefers to call a case

study, tried to go into the causes of the Indo-Pak conflict, particularly those externally or environmentally created. He reveals a built-in bias. But his bias, as projected in this study, does not seem to be a fad; there are historical, ideological and also factual reasons for it.

Brines' main thesis is that in spite of some very unhappy and unhealthy inherent causes that gave birth to India and Pakistan, the two nations might have outgrown the limitations and avoided the effects of their infantile fixations, but for the U.S.-Pak military agreement. But this alliance could not be avoided; it was inevitable within the situation in which Pakistan was placed and also because of India's policy of non-alignment. But why? Because the Indo-Pak subcontinent is an area of strategic significance and 'although many influences govern Soviet and Chinese strategy at any particular period, both nations have clearly demonstrated unrelenting interest in areas of strategic significance to them, for either communist or nationalist reasons. The subcontinent has been a primary military area for Russia and China for centuries.' (P. 108). Besides, 'history had also demonstrated that the Kremlin, (and also China) 'had to be convinced, at all times, that it would meet superior power wherever it turned; that there were no undefended weak spots anywhere in the world.' (P. 119).

Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Indonesia, etc., are examples given of the communist strategy of revolution or national liberation, sometimes by direct involvement and at others by manipulating 'proxy wars' at local levels. 'The United States policy of containment was designed to produce these conditions (of superior power). Washington had been endeavouring for several years to block all avenues of militant Soviet (and also Chinese) expansion by the creation of defensive alliances and bilateral defence agreements.' (P. 119). In these circumstances, if southward communist penetration came, 'Pakistan, as the guardian of the approaches to India would be the chief victim. But gigantic India was the main target and Washington turned to Pakistan only after Nehru refused to discuss a defensive alliance.' (P. 120).

India did not only reject the U.S. proposal, it condemned the U.S.-Pak alliance, firstly, for dragging the subcontinent into the cold war and, secondly, for strengthening Pakistan with weapons that could be (and were) used against India. We also presented a posture of friendship with Soviet Russia and communist China. On the one hand, this attitude of ours created doubts about the policy of non-alignment in the minds of American defenders of freedom, and on the other, our opposition to let Pakistan become stronger provided a natural and easy outlet to her built-in feelings.

Thus, the military alliance 'sharpened Indo-Pak tensions. It became a constant factor in the reaction

and counteraction which characterised subsequent relations between the suspicious neighbours.' (P. 104). But Brines is sorry for this development because he feels that India has not learnt from history and like a jealous friend almost chides us when attacked and humiliated by China and supported by none, not even the Soviet Union. He reminds us of Nehru's request to Washington for help and its immediate acceptance by it besides the U.S. warning to Peking and, perhaps, rightly ascribes China's sudden halt of operations to these acts of Kennedy.

The Sino-Indian conflict was expected to soften our attitude towards the U.S.A. But somehow our relations with the Soviet Union did not let this happen; it did not turn back, in deed or word, on its promises. On the other hand, Pakistan took full advantage of our distress; it manoeuvred intimacy with Peking to the extent of allowing it into 'Azad Kashmir'. Already in trouble with China on the issue of borders, especially in Sinkiang, and naturally worried over Rawalpindi's hobnobbing with Peking as well as Washington, the Soviet Union also made gestures of friendship towards Pakistan. Almost as if anticipating this the Soviet Union kept its stand on Kashmir as vague as possible without losing India's hand, of course.

In spite of all this, neither Washington, nor Peking nor Moscow raised any objection against Rawalpindi grabbing aid from everywhere. So, once again in 1965 when involved in a full-fledged war with Pakistan, India found herself friendless. The Russian stand was again ambiguous. China and several West Asian countries openly sided with Pakistan. India was accused of escalating the war area which it did to prevent supply routes to the main combat region and it was reminded of its own criticism of U.S. bombing of North Viet Nam earlier. India once again raised its finger against the use of U.S. arms by Pakistan against it though they were said to have meant for fighting the communists. And once again, according to Brines, the American embargo on the supply of arms and their spare parts to Pakistan resulted in the setback it suffered at the hands of India, leading to the cessation of fighting.

At Tashkent, of course, Brines seems to be a little perplexed at Soviet performance; he has to compliment the Soviet Union for its own efforts, as well as in co-operation with the U.S. in the U.N., for peace in the subcontinent. But quite soon he falls back on his track when the Soviets oblige both the nations with arms. No doubt, Tashkent did not solve the Kashmir issue. But when did Kosygin say that he had called Ayub and Shastri to solve the Kashmir problem? He only wanted these two rivals to meet at one table and be friends which the U.N. resolution also wanted. Hence, Brines proceeds on his own argument and continues his study with a sense of vengeance hoping that 'astute leaders in both coun-

tries will eventually realise their common danger from the communist world and will retreat from it.' (P. 441)

He warns: 'In general, both countries accept Soviet Russia as a benign neighbour. This appears to be due largely to the fact that the Soviets have given no bloody example of their power in the immediate neighbourhood, as did Peking, and to a distortion of past history as evidence of Moscow's non-imperialist intentions. India on the whole credits the Soviets with a desire to help in its total economic rehabilitation, apparently without realising that they have given no significant aid to agriculture, the most critical and decisive area of essential improvement. Instead, by performance and promise the Soviet Union has attempted to encourage the maximum development of State farms in India. The apparent purpose is to create conditions by which the agricultural failure will drive the Indians into embracing the Soviet system as the only alternative. Industrially, the Soviets have concentrated upon prestige industrial projects capable of spawning the rioting workers of tomorrow.' (Po 441-2).

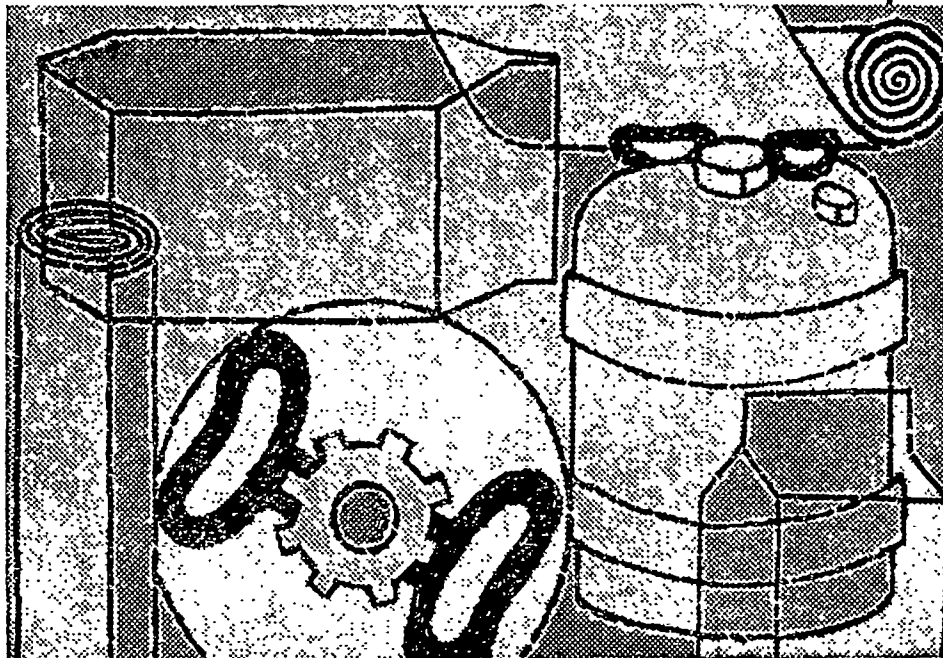
What a case study! One need not be a protagonist of the Soviet Union or even a fellow-traveller to read between the lines to understand the purpose of this study. Prejudices really die very hard.

However, the race for the arms build-up that is going on between the countries—taking from wherever they can—is really a dangerous phenomenon, especially because the 'dominant theme' in both countries' is the pervading influence of mutual insecurities. Each has fed itself through independence on fear of invasion and conquest by the other.' (P. 433).

And the tragedy is that in spite of realising this, the author wants them to add one more influence of insecurity, that is, from the communists. However, he is right when he says that the importance of Kashmir has been frequently exaggerated. Pakistani insistence on a settlement of Kashmir 'has raised an impassable barrier against even a modest start towards an over-all solution of the subcontinent's problems.' (P. 436). 'Kashmir is the peak of differences and as India now argues, must be approached by clearing the undergrowth at its base.' (P. 437). And this can be done by mutual goodwill and negotiations between the leaders of the nations themselves. Whoever can bring this about, the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R., will do real service to the cause of peace in the subcontinent. But that 'whoever' must be welcome to both, and not be the 'unwelcome foreign interference' which Brines suggests. (P. 442). Tashkent has, at least, shown the way; that he does not like this, is a different matter.

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## THE EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED

a symposium on  
the crisis facing  
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Michigan State University

### ATTITUDES

**V. V. John**, Editor of 'Quest'

### THE DISPOSSESSED

**Rudolf Gyan d'Mello**, political worker,  
active on the youth front

### FOR DEVELOPMENT

**K. R. Sivaramakrishnan**, Chief,  
Manpower Resources, Institute  
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### FURTHER READING

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### COVER

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# The problem . . .

WHO is the educated unemployed? In a country where 70 per cent of the population is illiterate, even a person who can only read and write may well claim to be 'educated'. But in the context of this discussion, an educated person is generally regarded as one who is at least a 'matriculate'. Similarly, the expression 'unemployed' is generally used to mean a failure to get any job whatsoever. The discussion of the problem of 'educated unemployment', therefore, does not ordinarily cover three important aspects. Firstly, it does not deal with the lakhs of persons who have completed primary school or dropped out of secondary schools without being matriculates, although they are more numerous and often face similar problems. Secondly, it does not deal with 'mis-employment' such as a graduate working as a bus conductor or a science graduate working as a despatch clerk; and, thirdly, it also does not deal with the under-utilization of whatever limited trained and employed manpower we have because we do not provide it with proper conditions of work.

The problem of educated unemployment is not new. It begins to be noticed as soon as the output of the secondary and university system outstrips the available jobs. It was noticed in West Bengal, for instance, as early as 1924. It became serious enough to be dealt with as an all-India problem in 1935, when the Sapru Committee considered it. In the last thirty years or so, it has become accentuated everywhere mainly because a tremendous expansion has taken place in secondary and university enrolment and the available jobs for educated persons have not increased in proportion.

It must also be noted that a certain adjustment in the market for educated persons is continually

taking place. For instance, a person who had completed his primary school was regarded, until 1921, to be good enough to be a primary teacher. During the last 45 years, the output of matriculates has increased; the salaries of primary teachers have gone up; and social opinion has changed in the sense that matriculates no longer consider it beneath their dignity to be primary teachers. Consequently, matriculation has now become the minimum qualification for appointment as a primary teacher. Over the next 45 years, a liberal arts degree may similarly become the minimum qualification for being a primary teacher and the matriculate may go out of consideration just as the student who has completed his primary school is ignored today. This process of adjustment between salaries, social status and qualifications alters the character of the market for educated persons from time to time. But it does not lessen the gravity of the problem of educated unemployment which has ever been on the increase.

At present, the situation is serious. The number of educated persons registered on the live registers of the employment exchanges as job-seekers in June 1968—and this probably is the best indication we have of the magnitude of the problem—was about 9.1 lakhs. Of these, about 7.7 lakhs are matriculates and 1.4 lakhs are graduates and post-graduates. Among these latter, about 60,000 are graduates and post-graduates in arts; about 30,000 in science, about 18,000 in commerce; and about 15,000 in education. In the last two years, unemployment has become serious even among engineering graduates. 'Give us jobs, not speeches' has been the slogan of many angry men in a number of recent convocations. Since the expansion of

secondary and higher education is tending to become faster and the creation of new jobs is even less able to keep pace with it, the situation is tending to worsen year after year. The Education Commission pointed out that, on the basis of present trends of expansion in secondary and higher education, and even on the optimistic assumption of a six per cent rate of economic growth, there will be, by 1986, about 4 million 'too many' matriculates and 1.5 million 'too many' graduates.

Education, it may be pointed out, does not create unemployment. In fact, a chronic and increasing unemployment is built into the present situation where the population growth is faster than the creation of new jobs, so that the over-all level of unemployment is increasing from year to year. If education were not to spread, we would still have to face the problem of growing unemployment or underemployment, especially in the rural areas where the rate of economic growth is comparatively slower. But education converts rural uneducated unemployment or underemployment which can be politically ignored into urban educated unemployment which has such a nuisance value that it cannot but be noticed. It is thus a force for good as well as evil. On the one hand, it generates forces which compel social change in favour of justice and equality while, on the other, it creates a band of angry young men who tend to become violent and destructive.

All unemployment is tragic, whether among the educated or among the uneducated. But it is more tragic among the educated partly because their individualities have been awakened and hopes and aspirations raised, and partly because a fair amount of scarce resources has been invested in their education. While, therefore, the State must make every effort to secure full employment for all, it cannot but give an over-riding priority to problems of educated unemployment.

How can this difficult problem be tackled? There are two obvious long-term solutions; population control which will reduce the number of young persons—educated or otherwise—entering the labour force every year and accelerated economic growth, which will increase employment opportunities. While efforts on these lines must continue and be intensified, we have to look out for and implement other remedial programmes as well.

The most obvious and common suggestion is to restrict the expansion of secondary and higher education to a level where the output

of the educational system would be about equal to the new employment opportunities created. This is the well-known manpower approach. There are several hurdles to its general acceptance. In the first place, it is not easy to make dependable estimates of further manpower needs, especially over a long-term period. The problem is comparatively easier for technical personnel. But even here, one is often led into unforeseen difficulties. Our estimates of engineering personnel, for instance, have gone wrong in the last three years. We are hastily reducing the intake of engineering colleges just now; but one does not feel sure that this may not land us into undesirable shortages in the fifth plan.

Unfortunately, even this limited degree of accuracy is not possible in the estimates of personnel with general education. How does one estimate, for example, the precise requirements of matriculates or graduates of arts because several jobs can be filled by either group? The general consensus therefore seems to be that the manpower approach has some validity for professional, technical and vocational education, where it may be adopted, subject to the condition that the techniques of estimation are continually revised in the light of changing circumstances. But in so far as personnel with general education is concerned, any accurate estimation of manpower forecasts seems to be hazardous; and it is this category of manpower that covers about ninety per cent of the enrolment at the secondary stage and about sixty per cent at the university stage.

Even assuming that forecasts of manpower with general education can be made, there is a very strong view that it is neither possible nor desirable to restrict the expansion of general secondary and higher education on their bases. Such correlation between the output of the educational system and employment opportunities will involve a restriction on admissions to secondary and higher education. Such a move is not politically acceptable at present, and it is strongly opposed by the rural people and backward classes who alone stand to lose under such a restriction.

It is also argued that general secondary and higher education which leads to social change should not be restricted in a modernising society; and there is also a view that even educated unemployment which makes the powers that be sit up and take notice is to be preferred to a stagnant society where peace may be purchased at the heavy price of denying educational opportunities to the underprivileged classes. Public opinion is thus strongly opposed to a policy of restricted admissions to secondary and higher education in spite of the

continuous support over the years which it has received from the academics. How to sell this 'policy'—which is even more urgently needed for maintaining standards—to the general public or to the government is a major problem facing education at present.

There is, however, a more willing acceptance of indirect measures which are calculated to reduce the expansion of secondary and higher education. For instance, it is suggested that suitable vocational and terminal courses may be offered to those children who complete primary school so that they would not desire to proceed to secondary schools. What is even more important, it has been proposed that the secondary stage should be vocationalised and half or even more of its enrolment diverted into different walks of life so that pressures on higher education would be reduced. This process can be accelerated by adopting suitable policies of remuneration which would place a higher premium than at present on middle-level manpower.

A third suggestion put forward is that the Central and the State governments should change their recruitment policies, select their employees at the end of the secondary stage, and train them, where necessary, at the cost of the State through suitable programmes of post-recruitment education. This, it is argued, will cut down the expansion of higher education because only those who are genuinely interested in academic work will think of joining the universities.

Yet another suggestion is that the courses of the first degree may be made more practicable so that the students, who do not have the necessary academic aptitudes, could be trained for diversified and more easily obtainable employment through various practical programmes. This, it is argued, can be an effective pragmatic approach in a situation where it is next to impossible to reduce the lure of the university degree.

Some other ideas put forward are: (1) adoption of an 'intermediate' technology with a view to creating more jobs for a given level of investment; (2) training for self-employment; and (3) improvement of standards in education so that the number of 'unemployable' educated is reduced to the minimum.

A bold alternative programme suggested is to utilise all trained manpower available by organising development programmes in a big way. For instance, it is suggested that we might develop a full programme of universal primary education in the next five to ten years by utilising all available matriculates as teachers. Similar programmes can be conceived for other categories of trained manpower. But

the political courage and financial resources to implement such policies seem to be lacking.

The pity is that no well-informed or determined bid is being made to tackle this major social problem effectively. The progress made in implementing the long-term solutions is meagre and that in giving effect to the short-term measures is even less. The direct and effective programmes which could have reduced the dimensions of the problem to manageable proportion, viz., selective admissions to higher secondary and university education, is not socially acceptable and the bold alternative of utilising all available manpower by accelerating development does not seem to be politically and financially feasible. Even the indirect methods which can make a slow but sure impact on the problem, and which are acceptable in theory, are not implemented in practice for some reason or other.

The academic debate on the subject is desultory, often lacking in depth and unsupported by meaningful research. The politician does not seem to be greatly disturbed by the problem as yet, especially because many an educated unemployed is readily becoming a whole-time and convenient political agent who earns his keep with his own wits and secures the much needed political support for his boss or ally. There seems to be little contact or cooperation between the academics and the political leadership, either in studying the problem in depth, or in devising vigorous measures for its solution.

Against this background of inaction and drift, secondary and higher education continues to expand in an unplanned manner. This very expansion dilutes standards and increases the number of unemployable persons. It also widens the distance between a degree and a job and thereby weakens the motivation of the average student and lowers the standards still further. Higher education thus tends to become less and less meaningful; and, in consequence, the monster of student unrest is born and continues to erupt with ever increasing frequency and a continuously deepening element of violence. All this leads to considerable social disorganisation and augurs ill for the future.

But we seem to have become powerless to control the situation. Those who see and realise the dangerous consequences are powerless to act; and among those who have the power to act, some are too delighted with the immediate gains of political support to care even for the not-too-distant future, while others devoutly wish for an accentuation of the evil because an educated unemployed tends to turn, first pink and then, red.

J. P. NAIK

# Manpower crisis

ROHINI P. SINHA

THE observed inability of the Indian economy in recent years to absorb all its educated manpower in gainful employment<sup>1</sup> is posing a serious challenge to policy makers and it is becoming a matter of great concern to informed public opinion. The involuntary idleness of any resource in any country is wasteful and hence undesirable but it is even more so for an underdeveloped country. It is indeed disturbing for an underdeveloped country to discover that an increasing proportion of its well-developed manpower resource continues to remain unemployed against its will. In the present

paper, the discussion will proceed along the lines suggested in the problem. The author proposes first to analyze briefly the consequences of such unemployment. Its possible causes will be explored, and the conclusion will be a discussion of some of the corrective measures that can be taken to reduce the rate of unemployment to an acceptable level.

The consequences of persistent unemployment among the educated

1. Manpower Directorate, Ministry of Home Affairs, 'Educated Unemployment', *Manpower Journal*, Vol. IV, No. 1, April-June 1968, pp. 75-100.

ed persons are primarily of economic, human, and socio-political nature. The adverse economic effects are the following. (1) The loss of income and output due to labour unemployment cannot be retrieved later. It is largely unshiftable in time, unlike a capital good whose lost production because of strike or lockout can be recaptured by using it later for longer than usual hours.

### Labour

(2) In the macro context, labour is a fixed cost item to the economy. Even when a person's contribution to national income is zero, he does consume a positive amount of output toward his subsistence, and the level of customary subsistence will be higher for one who is educated than for one who is not. Hence, the greater the number of trained people who are unemployed and/or the longer the period of their unemployment, the greater will be the diversion of output from those who produce to those who fail to produce. This will then result in lowering the standard of living of the former.

(3) In an underutilized economy, increasing employment will make possible higher income which, in turn, will stimulate production and growth. (4) The economic loss will be further accentuated if the unemployed worker happens to be an educated worker. A higher level of training has its counterpart in the higher cost of training. For example, in 1961-62, the direct educational cost per pupil at university and professional level was found to be about ten times as high as at the secondary level.<sup>2</sup> This would then mean that the invest-

ment loss during the period of unemployment would be ten times larger for the university degree holders than for people with secondary level education.<sup>3</sup>

The concern for the continuing unemployment among the educated ones comes also from the human aspect of this problem. Jobs provide the major source of income for most people. Under such a situation, denial of an opportunity to work is likely to cause hardship to the unemployed person and his family. This is likely to make him psychologically depressed and, perhaps, demoralized. With a low financial status and a depressed state of mind, he would possibly accept any job that is available to him. This certainly will ease his economic stress but the mismatching of the job with his aspirations and training will still leave him frustrated.

### The Definition

According to the poser, however, this worker will not fall in the category of the unemployed, since it definitionally excludes 'mis-employment' from unemployment. But then it will be a very restrictive definition to adopt for our present discussion. Economic logic would dictate that such a worker be included in the unemployed category on the ground that under—or mis-employment is certainly part unemployment.

For any socio-political system to sustain itself, two conditions, among others, must be satisfied. (1) The resistance power of the system should be strong enough to withstand the pressure of the disruptive forces, and this power increases with the increase in the widespread stake in the system. For instance, American capitalism is more secure in the United States largely because it has created vested interests in it. People are resistant to drastic changes if these changes would involve immediate loss of benefits to them.<sup>4</sup> (2) If there is an absence of an alternative

(real or imagined) to the present set-up, people may put up even with an unjust system. This will be true when there is no ideological opportunity to substitute for the existing system.

Both these conditions for the stability of the system will be weakened if there is substantial unemployment, especially among the educated people. If a poor person is forced to be idle, he has nothing to lose if the socio-political organization changes, and hence he will not put up a fight to preserve it. Being educated, he is possibly aware of other systems functioning elsewhere in the world, or at least he is intellectually more capable than an ignorant person to reason out an alternative to the present system which denies him his participation. He may then join the forces which work for its abolition, the outcome of which may be good or bad. Thus, such threats from the educated unemployed do constitute genuine concern for those who advocate the continuation of the present socio-political order.

### The Causes

The high level of unemployment among the educated people (persons with secondary level education and above) may be traced to the following sources.

(1) *Imbalance in Supply-Demand Relations:* The measure for unemployment of any category of workers is the excess of supply of those workers over demand for them at the going wage rate. It immediately follows, then, that either (a) there is an excess of supply, or (b) a deficiency of demand, for workers at that rate of wage. The task here will be to analyze the factors that are largely responsible for (a) and (b) above.

(a) *Supply:* The rise in the number of educated people, as defined earlier, available for jobs is obviously due to the rise in enrolments at secondary and higher levels of education. And the observed increase in the number of pupils now attending classes is quite substantial. For example, the rates of increase in 1965-66 over

2. Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi, *Working Paper No. 3/1965*, National Educational System — Review of Growth, Part III — 'Educational Expenditures', Table IV, p. 21.

3. B. Ramamoorthy and M. S. Prakasa Rao, 'Terminalization Approach to Pre-University Education in India', a mimeographed paper read at the Seminar on Measurement of Cost Productivity and Efficiency of Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, p. 16.

4. John R. Commone, *Institutional Economics*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison (1961), Vol. 2, p. 887.

1950-51 in enrolments in secondary, university, and technical level of education were 328.9, 266.7 and 745.7 per cent respectively (Rama-moorthy and Prakasa Rao, 'Terminalisation approach to pre-university education in India, p. 7). Such enlarged enrolments made it possible for their larger outturns after schooling. This expansion in enrolments was largely responsible for expansion in educational facilities. For instance, during the period of the first three plans, facilities for engineering education increased by about six times at the degree, and about eight times at the diploma level. The medical facilities at the degree level increased by about four times, and those in agriculture by over eight times.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, ever since independence, the country has experienced a gradual increase in per capita income. This should positively affect the enrolment levels at schools, since we would expect that as the parental financial status improves, the parents will be more willing and able to invest in the education of their children.

#### Plan Estimates

(b) *Demand*: The deficiency of demand in educated manpower was mainly because of the following factors. 1. The rate of economic growth in the past years has been sluggish. According to the Draft fourth plan, the percentage increase in net national product for the period 1961-65, was only 4.2, but the growth rate required to absorb the backlog of unemployed and the new entrants in the labour market was much larger. Adisesiah, while evaluating the unemployment problem of engineers only, estimates that for their full employment during the period of 1969-73 an overall growth rate of eight per cent will be needed, and the engineering-intensive sectors, according to the same study, should grow still faster—twice the rate of overall required growth.<sup>6</sup> 2. The shift in emphasis from the industrial to the agricultural sector

possibly also accounted for a fall in the demand for educated manpower, since the skill input in agricultural production is not as large as in the production of industrial goods. 3. A fall in business activity would postpone new investment projects. This would then close the new avenues of possible employment of trained people, even though those who are already employed are usually protected from cycle-induced unemployment. For example, teachers, doctors, government employees, and industrial personnel in the rank of supervisor and above usually hold on to their jobs even in the face of business downturn.

#### Insulation

(2) *Structured Labour Market*: India's labour market is highly 'structured', in the sense that a very large portion of it is removed or insulated from market influences of supply and demand. The insulation is effected by the 'structure of job rights or privileges' within the firm.<sup>7</sup> Employment in the public sector, which is a very large proportion of total non-agricultural employment in India<sup>8</sup>, is largely of this kind. That would then impede the adjustment process in employment through adjustment in wage rates. This is one reason why we could have an increasing wage rate coexisting with an increasing level of unemployment for the same type of workers in the same labour market.

(3) *Geographical Immobility*: Lack of geographical mobility could also create a surplus of labour in one local or regional labour market while, at the same time, there might be a shortage of the

same type of workers in another. And this is due either to the lack of information about labour market opportunities elsewhere, or due to the attachment to particular regions by the workers, or because of language handicaps. Reorganization of States along linguistic lines has also possibly reinforced immobility, thus creating unemployment in one region, and a labour shortage in another simultaneously.

(4) *Job Status*: On the prestige scale of society, certain jobs enjoy higher status than others. For example, jobs in the Indian Administrative Service are highly prized by most of us. This would then motivate youngsters, especially in India's highly stratified society to prepare for positions with high social standing, resulting in larger number of applicants in certain categories of jobs. For example, a recent survey of public opinion<sup>9</sup> shows that 52 per cent of college students in four metropolitan areas aspire to be either college teachers or government officials. Obviously, government offices and institutions of higher learning cannot provide jobs for such a high proportion of students, assuming that all of them qualify for the positions they aspire to.

#### Transitions

In any society, there will always be some short-term unemployment resulting from labour market 'friction'. A worker is neither frozen into a particular job, nor is he guaranteed the job with the same employer for ever. Even at times of prosperity, there will always be some workers looking for jobs, or some employers looking for workers. Even if they find what they are looking for, such adjustments cannot be made with precise timing. Therefore, there will be a period of unavoidable unemployment because of transitions. Public policy should be such as to control factors, other than market frictions, that cause unemployment among the educated people.

On the supply side of market

5. Government of India, *Fourth Five Year Plan: A Draft Outline*, 115.

6. Malcolm S. Adisesiah, 'A Note on Unemployment of Engineers in India', a mimeographed paper written in response to communication from Ministers of Education and Finance, Planning Commission, and Ford Foundation's Programme advisor.

7. Everett Johnson Burt, Jr., *Labor Markets, Unions, and Government Policies*, St. Martin's Press, New York (1965), 62.

8. Government of India *Statistical Abstract of Indian Union: 1966*. Close examination of Tables 165, 166, 167A, 196, 170 and 171 will reveal the importance of public sectors in sectors covered by these tables.

9. *Public Opinion Surveys, 'Career Aspiration: The Conflict with Realities'*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, Oct. 1968, p. 14-15.

relations, the following measures, among others, may be taken. (1) To parents, children's education is both an investment as well as a consumer good. By raising the private cost of financing the children's education at secondary and higher levels (in effect, making education an expensive consumer item), enrolments would decline. This would cut into the source of supply of educated people. However, cost should not be raised so high as to make education a privilege which only the children of the rich would enjoy. Merit and not money alone should determine the prospect for one's higher education. Bright students should not be denied their studies because of their poverty. In such cases, income supplements may be given individually on the basis of merit. As a matter of fact, the reduction in the government support to public education will release funds that may be used as income supplements to the poor.

#### Vocationalization

(2) Presently, secondary schools in India are largely preparatory schools for college education. If their curricula are vocationalized, as argued by Ramamoorthy and Rao (pp. 22-27), there will be a further reduction in the number of high school students crowding the labour market with no specific skills to sell. It would also decrease enrolments in colleges.

(3) Educational policy should be tailored to the manpower needs of the economy. This will involve synchronization of educational output with the input needs of the country's material production. (4) As a short-term solution to the problem of educated unemployment, 'brain drain' should also be encouraged.<sup>10</sup>

The problem of unemployment of the educated can also be attacked with measures which would stimulate demand for educated people.

They will mainly include the following. (1) To the extent possible, the rate of economic growth should be accelerated. (2) If unemployment is due to a slack in business activity, well-known tools of fiscal and monetary policy should be effectively applied. (3) Frictional unemployment, even though unavoidable to a degree, can be cushioned by the dispensation of organized information about job opportunities elsewhere.

#### A New Structure

Still another set of policy proposals could be contemplated along lines discussed below. (1) Politically, it is probably not so easy to 'destructure' our highly 'structured' labour market. However, we can certainly loosen the structure to some extent. For example, increases in wage rates should be geared to productivity. Room should be made available for managerial decision-making rather than spelling out all the rights, privileges, hiring and firing procedures in great detail. Present practices harbour inefficiency which, in turn, retards output and employment. (2) Besides short-term measures to improve mobility between areas, long-term policy should be to develop one national language to overcome the different language barriers within the country. (3) All out efforts should be made to educate people to alter their values with respect to job status. Particularly, the social prestige that is attached to white collar relative to blue collar jobs and wage employment relative to self-employment should be broken.

By defining an unemployed worker as that worker who does not have any work at all, the poser seems to suggest that public policy should concern itself only with the fully unemployed persons. This should certainly have priority in our policy programmes but the problem of widespread under-employment and 'hidden' unemployment should also be taken seriously. The economic effect on the economy of two persons only half-employed will be the same as of one person not employed at all.

10. Rohini P. Sinha, 'The Economics of Brain Drain', *Manpower Journal*, April-June 1968, pp. 54-74.



# Realistic pricing

SUBBIAH KANNAPPAN

IN dealing with educated unemployment, it is wise to sort out several aspects of the problem at the outset. We are dealing with a phenomenon whose magnitude and components we do not know. The phenomenon itself is a consequence of the interplay of decisions taken by individuals (and their parents), by constituent segments of the educational system, by private and public sector employers, and by the government. This interplay takes place within a democratic framework which legitimises and indeed encourages individual and collective pressures to advance the welfare of concerned persons. Any major proposal for action must keep these points in mind if the measures comprised by it are to command support.

The phenomenon of educated unemployment is not the unmitigated disaster that it is thought to be although unquestionably there are a number of disturbing features. It is in part a consequence of the unprecedented expansion of the Indian economy in the last twenty years. As a result, there

has been a continuous increase in the demand for persons at various levels of education. Although the supply of educated manpower (and the implicit demand for education) is a response to this increased demand for educated manpower, supply may nevertheless exceed demand at prevailing levels of remuneration and cause unemployment.

One reason for this is, as Professor Mark Blaug rightly points out in a forthcoming study on educated unemployed in India, the failure of student fees and costs to reflect adequately the real costs of providing an education. Thus, there is a basis for arguing, as many have done on the basis of careful work, that the returns on investment in education are not as attractive as other options (A. C. Harberger, Nalla Gounden) and that the returns to the individual exceed the returns to society (Mark Blaug). There is thus strong ground for raising the private costs of education to more realistic levels.

A case for this could be made even if one were to suppose that

the incidence of educational subsidies roughly corresponds to the incidence of tax collections due to the difference in the impact on the aggregate demand for education of a tax-financed educational system, as opposed to a system financed by disbursements from disposable income. Actually, it seems likely that, at least in some branches of advanced and specialised education, the benefits exceed tax collections and are further distributed primarily among the richer strata of society.

However, although the case for more realistic costing of educational services is a strong one, and the same thing is true of measures to stimulate the economy and the demand for educated workers, the evidence does not necessarily support the view that the returns to education have been falling. For, although the incremental differentials associated with higher levels of educational attainment have been narrowing, at least some elements of cost have also declined.

### Declining Costs

The direct costs associated with education (costs of commuting, of living away from home) and the indirect costs (income foregone) have probably come down for a great number of students due to greater dispersion in the location of schools and the greater flexibility with which the pursuit of skills and of an income can be undertaken simultaneously. There probably have been some economies of scale also, for such reasons as the greatly increased proportion of books produced locally and, in particular, in the different regional languages. (This last point is probably not true of some of the expensive attempts to translate advanced foreign books into the different Indian languages.)

These declines have to be balanced off against the increase in educational salaries and much careful work is needed to establish trends in the real costs of education for we are dealing with prices,

costs and incomes, all of which have increased in absolute terms but whose relative growth rates vary, during a period of considerable changes in educational technology and quality. Nevertheless, the two factors associated with declining unit costs of education are real enough and provide a measure of economic justification of the public pressure for increased educational facilities, especially in backward regions and rural areas, and of course, for backward classes, castes and groups.

Those disposed towards an aggregative equilibrium solution between the demand and the supply of educated workers have to bear this in mind. The considerable pressure for increased educational facilities is an entirely understandable response of different segments for sharing in the prosperity created by economic expansion and the pressure will not relent so long as education is a key to advancement and other avenues (such as small-scale entrepreneurship) seem unattractive. Such pressure is not only understandable but also rational.

What is more debatable, however, is the widespread and often poorly thought-out subsidisation of the difference between private and social costs. The failure to 'internalise' the latter means that many educational decisions are based on questionable—and one might add low—cost estimates. These include decisions made by individuals or their guardians, as well as various public authorities and educational institutions whose deficits are automatically covered by the central or higher government authority.

### Scanty Resources

However, and this is an important point, there are not enough resources to go around to meet the demands of all those who want education, and the demand is naturally the greater the lower the cost to be incurred. The result is endless queues at admission time, favouritism, and discrimination between social classes, between village and city, and between the

English-speaking and those who do not, all inevitable consequences of rationing limited opportunities.

The case for more realistic pricing is a more compelling one than the case for aggregate limitation of the output of the educational system (such as that favoured by N. Gopalaswami in his Minute of Supplementation to the Education Commission's report). Such over-all ceilings implicitly define ceilings for different types of education, regions and socio-economic groups and are bound to fail or create unbearable tensions because of the great discrepancy between demand and supply (or wants and capacity) at prevailing private costs. A necessary condition for achieving equilibrium between demand for, and supply of, educated personnel is that decision making at all levels be increasingly guided by the social costs of providing a given unit of education.

### Selective Subsidy

The argument is essentially unchanged even if it can be demonstrated that there is, a demand for some or all categories of the output of schools and colleges. For, this demand is at the lower price made possible by the subsidisation of educational cost, and all that it implies is that employers are encouraged to use this type of manpower even at low marginal productivity. In some cases, it may even imply a selective subsidy to a specific category of employers, for instance large firms in the private sector.

The argument that realistic pricing will deprive many of education is only partially a valid opposing consideration, for the present methods of rationing educational opportunity tend to do the same. Further, there is nothing to prevent a policy of realistic pricing being accompanied by a policy aimed at removing the disadvantages faced by the poor. Educational finance is often expensive or unavailable and loans to eliminate this source of imperfection in the human capital market must play a major role. Such a

policy will also provide a greater assurance of growth in funds available for education. There may still be a case for subsidising educational expenditures, but this will be done on the basis of explicit criteria and overwhelming need.

Over and beyond this, there is a great scope for intelligent innovations in the field of counselling, education and recruitment. A central objective is to achieve economies in producing educational services and to increase the returns from educational expenditures. An equally important objective is to create a system of education and employment which is highly responsive to changing conditions in the economy. More flexible curricula, better utilisation of overheads, continual reviews and alertness to cut out the dead wood and introduce the relevant, and salary and other incentives to encourage good performance are the kinds of things which are most desperately needed and least likely to be produced in the quest for aggregative and 'all-India' solutions.

Literally, vast numbers stay unemployed after matriculation or graduation not merely because they have indulgent parents or relatives, but because it is foolish for them to take any job that comes along unless it is 'the' job. Failure to wait for 'the' job means being stuck in something less desirable because of antiquated rules crippling effective search for alternatives, rigid class barriers against promotion, or so-called 'modern' employers who insist that they will not even look at your application unless you are already somewhere at the top.

The solution to the problem of educated unemployment requires making some headway in tackling these problems. It is not easy but the answers are not to be found in general and aggregative control which disregard the limitations of available knowledge and the fact that for millions education and employment constitute serious business.

# Attitudes

V. V. JOHN

ONE of my earliest recollections of pompous oratory is of a visiting speaker on the prize day of my school. I do not recall the details of his compendious treatment of the ills of education, except for the gem I treasure. In the course of his hour-long discourse he finally arrived at the problem of unemployment among

the educated. (In my part of the country, we knew the problem even in the twenties, and have for long learnt to live with it.) He disposed of the problem in a single sentence. 'Unemployment', he said, 'is not an educational problem; it is an economic problem.' He proceeded thereupon to other genuinely educational problems and, one may be sure, provided admirable solutions to all of them. My memory, alas, has misled them. All I remember is his deftly evasive action when confronted with the problem of unemployment.

The evasion continues in high places, but we do it now with more seemly elaboration. No problem is allowed to expose its stark nudity in public; we clothe it decently with reports and resolutions. If we have to live indefinitely with problems, it is only right that we should provide them a decent habitation in a committee or a commission.

If however we are seeking solutions and not merely indulging in ecological studies of the educated and the half-educated, we have to begin by recognizing that unemployment is an educational problem. It is easy for the educator to suggest that if we had a different social order, there would not be any unemployment. This may be true, but, if we had a different social order, the education that we now impart would be immediately seen to be inadequate and irrelevant, and the educators would be sacked.

### The Social Order

That the present social order does not have the wisdom or the energy to do anything drastic about our educational system should be considered a fortunate circumstance for the educators. But their own alibis in the matter of unemployment among the educated are less than honest. If it is the social order that is responsible for the malaise, it is the function of education to change the social order. Education is not a mere adjunct of the social order;

it is one of the forces that fashion the social order.

Unemployment doubtless is an economic problem, but it is not a problem for which economists have the answer. The pathetic way in which we look up to economists for succour in all our material ills, makes us true descendants of ancestors who believed in quackery. For a time, we felt that statisticians had the answer to our problems. Latterly, our naive faith has shifted to management experts. This however does not prevent our family planners from trying to sell the notion, through subsidised debates in the universities and in other ways, that over-population is responsible for unemployment: nirodhs are easier to procure than jobs.

### Grudging Provisions

The expedients that we think of may have a limited use in such a dire situation as ours. But nothing less than a radical change in the goals, methods and quality of our education can ultimately cure the ills of our economy. Our public speeches notwithstanding, our programmes of action are not inspired by any such faith in the capacity of education to cure our ills and transform our society. The scanty and grudging provisions that we make for education in our five-year plans, and the cheerful manner in which even the scanty provisions are wasted in the process of implementing the plans, indicate that we do not expect education to make any substantial contribution to relieving social and economic ills. If we had looked upon education as a national investment, we would be concerned over the poor returns that it yields. Instead, all we now ask of our educational institutions is to keep the students in check and let the rest of the community live its life in peace. Even this lowly expectation is not being fulfilled.

Meanwhile, educational planning goes merrily ahead without any regard to the needs of the country

or of its economy, and without any thought of what the clientele of our educational institutions will do on leaving school and college. The lack of proper calculation and forethought covered a supreme indifference in certain regions to the non-availability of resources for the establishment of institutions. That thousands of our primary schools function in conditions of the most incredible squalor does not deter us from spending money on monumental architecture for universities whose establishment could have been deferred. The Education Commission reported that in 1966 there were 160 colleges in the country, each with an enrolment of less than 100. Most of these institutions were more than two years old and had obviously come into existence to meet urges other than educational.

In 1967, when an M.L.A. in one of the States pressed for the starting of post-graduate classes in science subjects in the college, in his constituency, it was pointed out to him that (a) the college had that year produced only 3 B.Sc's. of the requisite grades for admission to the four post-graduate science subjects that he was pressing for, and (b) there already was unemployment in the State among M.Sc's. in three out of the four subjects. These objections were over-ruled, as the M.L.A. had made a promise about these classes during his election campaign; the classes were started as an emergency measure. The products of the legislator's fervour may be expected to join this year's clamorous crowd at the university convocation, shouting, 'We want jobs, not diplomas'.

### The Numbers Game

A gentleman who is now happily installed as planning minister in one of our States, declared some years ago, that irrespective of quality in our education, 'targets must be fulfilled'. This was during the days when our planning fervours were purely statistical, and we were busy playing the 'numbers game' of swelling

enrolments and the proliferation of institutions of all kinds. In those spacious days, we chose to ignore the fact that quality is itself the chief target in education. While, in any programme of ambitious development, a certain amount of waste cannot be helped, the deplorable fact was that our ambitions did not contain any ingredient of insistence on quality. We are now, after much experience and expenditure, discovering that being badly educated is even worse than being uneducated.

### Wrong Indicator

There is something alarmingly wrong when a country, where three-fourths of the population is still illiterate and where only a small proportion of the relevant age-group is able to receive higher education; is unable to find an adequate use for its educated youth. Matters have come to such a pass that the educational progress of every region in India could be gauged by the progress of unemployment among its youth. Having lived and worked in many parts of India, I have been able to watch the varying phenomenon in the different regions.

I went to college in old-time Travancore. As we finished college, my classmates and I could see around us vast numbers of graduates looking for jobs, and it speaks volumes for the spirit of our college that the shadow of unemployment did not cast too great a gloom over our last few months in college, though we had a lively awareness of the discomfitures awaiting us outside the portals of the college.

I remember one of Kerala's notable writers telling us in a speech how royally the first graduate of Travancore had been received many years earlier at the State borders by an emissary of the Maharaja who could offer him only a job on Rs. 800 a year, and how the speaker himself, graduating several years later, had consider-

able difficulty in resisting the blandishments of government departments that wanted to employ him and how on one occasion he had even to go into hiding in order to avoid being employed by the police department. At the time that he made the speech, however, the streets of Trivandrum were full of graduate job-seekers who would have been content to be hired as clerks. People started quarrelling most desperately over jobs, and the communalism of Kerala, which politicians were to exploit later, had its origins in this pitiful struggle for crumbs.

I spent ten years in Orissa where, in the beginning, there was such a shortage of men with postgraduate degrees to teach in colleges, that the Director of Public Instruction even wrote once to candidates at the postgraduate examinations offering them jobs on condition that they secured a second class. Things changed rapidly, and a little later persons from outside the State would be appointed only temporarily until local candidates were available. And there soon arrived a stage when new M.A.'s, pressing their claims to all the jobs in the State, started referring to public servants recruited from outside the State as 'foreigners'. It is so easy even for educated men to identify individual self-interest with patriotism.

### No Ambition

I worked for a brief while in a College in Delhi, and among my more uncomfortable memories is a language exercise I gave a group of eight undergraduates: I asked them to imagine that they had already graduated and wanted them to write an application for a suitable job. Seven of the eight students wrote applications for the jobs of clerks. Even in one of the good universities, and in a college that had a reputation for its academic standards, the system had snuffed out all youthful ambition.

Even the highest youthful ambition in the prestigious col-

leges is to pass the competitive examination for appointments in the administrative services, and there are colleges that are more proud of the bureaucrats among their alumni than of any scholars, scientists or leaders of opinion. And these latter, understandably, are a small number. Students derive the meanness of their ambitions from the meanness of the goals that the colleges propose to themselves. And of the most ambitious as well as of the least, among the students, it could be said that they think more of what society will do to or for them, than of what they would be able to do for and to society. This is an excellent apprenticeship for joining the ranks of hirelings or of the unemployed.

### Engineers

The wrong moral is being drawn from the recent phenomenon of large-scale unemployment among engineering graduates. It is somewhat difficult to understand why it is more disturbing that an engineering graduate should be unemployed, than that any other graduate should be in a similar plight. (Should we practise our caste and class distinctions even in the realms of deprivation?) Is it because we spend more money in training engineers than in training (or whatever it is we do to) an arts graduate? Is it because engineering students are carefully and competitively selected, while anyone can get into an arts college? If in nothing else, let us practise our egalitarian principles at least in commiserating the lot of educated youth, whether they be technologists or the lowly arts graduates. A young man without a job is a young man who should cause concern to society, whether the job he is without is a specialised one or of the more common variety.

The joblessness of the engineering graduate is an unanswerable indictment of our planning and our programmes of training. It is difficult to believe that there are

not plenty of engineering jobs in the country, waiting to be done. Do the young engineers want the capital needed for starting on these jobs, or do they, after so many years of training, still lack the skill to do some of these jobs? In the secretariat and other government offices in the town where I live, there are many water coolers that have been out of order for years, and there apparently is a shortage of technicians to do the repair work. I once lived in a town where, for two years, I used to notice in the premises of an office of the public works department, several tractors and bulldozers rusting away, because they could not get the parts to put them back in commission. Is our technology so backward as to be unable even to repair machines that we import? Or would it be that these questionings by a mere layman are rather naive, and that the engineers are not looking for engineering jobs but for desk jobs under the government?

#### No Correlation

The absence of any correlation between the nature of our education and the needs of the country has now caught up with us in a spectacular manner in the shape of nearly 40,000 frustrated, angry, unemployed engineers in the country. Anyone could have seen this coming in the last two decades. The period is marked by the ruins of programmes designed to bring some realism into our educational programmes. They were introduced with much fanfare, with photographers and the press in attendance, but they all foundered on the rock of our desire to live like an affluent country before we had achieved affluence, and our too obvious condescension to the unprivileged sections of the people while the privileged sections tried to preserve intact the sector of the *status quo* which happened to suit them. Instances are what we did with basic education, Janata colleges and multi-purpose schools, and are currently doing to the Rural Institutes. Very soon, the same thing will happen to our

polytechnics and engineering colleges. Work experience programmes recommended by the Kothari Commission have not yet been started. It is a safe forecast that in another five or six years there will be disillusioned outcries against them too.

#### Basic Education

Basic education was based on one of the soundest educational philosophies in the world, and was intended as a corrective to the inadequacies and unreality of our education. By adopting it generally through an edict from the State capitals, without orienting the teachers properly and identifying meaningful programmes of craft learning, what was finally achieved was triviality and humbug. (Dr. Zakir Husain pronounced it a fraud.) In the event, one of the more candid ministers of the Union Government could describe basic education as 'a good system of education for other people's children'. It was noticed that the ministers and other functionaries who rhapsodised over basic education, sent their own offspring to other schools.

The way we implemented the programme of basic education, we lost the opportunity of infusing into our educational system a respect for manual work and a capacity to correlate the work of the hand with the reach of the mind. The Education Commission is very coy about basic education; but to those who have objected to their failure to salvage it from misunderstanding and the wrong sort of implementation, the members of the Commission have been quietly saying that though they have not used the term, their own 'work experience' is aimed at the same objective, and they claim that they have carried it further to all levels of education.

The Janata College experiment came to grief because its beneficiaries came to suspect that it was an urban conspiracy to keep the villager contented with his lot in the village. It is the same suspicion that led to resistance to the Rajaji plan in Madras many years

ago, under which village children were provided with facilities of part-time school, the rest of the time being spent in assisting their parents in their traditional occupations. It also accounted partly for the indifference of the rural communities to the distinctive features of basic education.

The Janata College programme for meeting the needs of the village in the matter of health, education and agricultural improvements, was admirable, but it did not provide for sufficient flexibility to enable the trainees to qualify for, and go on to, more advanced programmes of training. It was unreasonable to expect rural youth to be content with professional training that, while qualifying them for certain jobs in the village community, almost put the ceiling to their professional prospects.

#### Training Courses

It is the same objection that has made the Rural Institutes less attractive to students than the ordinary arts and science colleges that are able to look at the prospect of eventual unemployment without blenching. In all professional courses that lead to very moderate levels of employment, an important consideration is how far the programme is flexible enough to provide opportunities for a change-over to other courses and careers. At that level, careers should be open-ended, opening up possibilities of advancement through other avenues. One reason why teachers' colleges do not at present attract a very good quality of students is that the secondary school teacher's job is a blind alley for anyone with academic ambition. If school salaries were related to academic qualifications and experience, irrespective of the grade one was teaching, we would get better and better-qualified teachers in school; they would not have to seek places in college for their professional advancement. Alternatively, the school teacher's training and experience should come to be recognised as relevant

to the recruitment of college teachers and for other careers.

### Practicalization

Whatever other reasons there may be why educated men stay unemployed, it is not because they are too choosy. Thirty years ago, in Travancore, graduates were at such a loose end that they accepted jobs as bus conductors in the State Transport Service. There is irony in the fact that C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, who was Dewan of the State at that time, and had immense faith in his own oratory as a cure for all ills, said, talking of the goals of the new Travancore University, that there was a urgent need for the 'practicalization' of education. Having coined the ugly word, he proceeded to make the new university a replica of the older ones; graduates continued to acquire a certain amount of irrelevant learning, and then go and apply for clerks' jobs.

It is a slander on the British that they introduced their system of education in the country in order to recruit clerks for their administrative offices. What they had in view for the products of the universities they established, were managerial functions below the top level. It is also useful to remember that the graduates which the system produced in the last century did not become clerks; they became administrators, scholars and leaders. It is in this century, and under purely Indian auspices, that a university degree came to be laid down as a minimum 'qualification' for 'Upper Division Clerks' in government offices. It is not difficult to see how wasteful it is to give a university education to a young man if all you want to do with him is to make him a clerk.

A result of this was that standards of university education fell. For, universities like other agencies of production, finally tend to produce as low a quality of product as the consumer would accept. If we wish to reverse this disastrous trend, we should begin by making a rule that, as from four or five years hence, a university

degree will not only not be required for the lowlier jobs in the government, but such a degree would be deemed a disqualification.

Will this not swell the numbers of unemployed graduates still further? Is not a clerk's job for a graduate better than no job at all? The answer to these questions is that the embargo on the employment of graduates as office assistants and to similar ranks is not being suggested as a complete solution to the wastage of educational skills. This decision will have to be accompanied by devising means for making sensible use of such skills.

### Shedding Hypocrisy

This cannot be done without ridding our social and educational policies of the present large accretion of hypocrisy. In other words, we should decide that in matters of public policy, we mean what we say. And, yet, we are surrounded by instances of 'humbug'. For instance, we profess official adherence to the 'three-language formula', but if we really mean it, why don't we make a rule that no one will be appointed to the public services, above the rank of a peon, unless he knows the three languages of the formula? (We might allow a period of five years, for implementing such a rule rigidly.) If we believe in basic education, why don't ministers and public functionaries show their faith in the system by sending their children to basic schools?

If work experience and national service are going to be adopted as an integral part of our educational system, why don't we begin with the prestigious institutions in the larger cities, where the more opulent send their children? If we are pledged to the 'socialistic pattern' (in any non-nebulous sense), why do we perpetuate wide disparities in the emoluments of public functionaries, and a system where the administrator is more highly rewarded and held in higher honour than those engaged in more productive occupations

and in the enrichment of human lives?

### The Cure

Without a radical change in attitudes, graduates will not plan their lives in terms of productive work, instead of looking for jobs where all the hard work will be done by other people. Without such a change of attitude, we shall perpetuate the present system under which educated men become hirelings of men less well educated. If even in universities, power is worshipped more than learning, is it any wonder that everyone wants to wangle positions of power, instead of the advancement in learning and of productive labour? If our values do not change, our education will not teach self-respect or self-reliance.

In fact, the educated man is in need of re-education. He should learn to establish some correlation between his skills and the needs of the community. Institutions should take the initiative in this matter and identify the needs of the community they serve, and modify their programmes to meet those needs. Institutions should try to create job opportunities by introducing new techniques and skills, instead of waiting passively for the community to find jobs for the graduates. What William Morgan did at Antioch College by way of community service for the small town in which the College was situated, and work-study for the students, is an example that could be studied with profit. But this can be efficiently done only if each programme is of manageable dimensions. Though India is a large country, all programmes of improvement need not be proportionately large. 'The way to peel a sack of potatoes is to take one potato at a time'. What we need is not one gigantic plan of improvement, which will be diluted out of all meaningful substance if generally applied; we need a thousand programmes of smaller dimensions, and the accumulation of such local initiative is what will cure our ills.

# The dispossessed

RUDOLF GYAN D'MELLO

IN our kind of political structure some degree of economic malfunctioning is to be expected. Even if effective economic controls could be instituted, deficiencies would persist—but of diminishing magnitudes. The question is at what stage does a particular malfunction become a problem; unemployment is built into the structure of a free society; therefore, distressing as it may be in human terms, it is not regarded as a vital problem until it threatens the stability of the established social order.

The unemployed, whatever their economic condition, are focal points of tension in society. When unemployment is fuelled by the educated, the situation can become potentially inflammable. In this situation, given the right prerequisites, there can be an explosion—even if one does not normally subscribe to the 'big bang' theories. Admittedly, this may appear to be adopting an extremist view, for there can be several little bangs before the major one or before everything subsides into quietude—until the next stage of criticality.

Certainly the country is throbbing with little explosions and minor flares, indicating that the situation is readying for something more dramatic. Those who have

infinite faith in our capacity to absorb all kinds of social injustices and external influences, banking on our past history and philosophical traditions, might well be in for a shock. We are no longer contained inside our traditional cultural frontiers by the natural geographic ones, as we were until recently.

There are statistical obstacles in the way of assessing the magnitude of the unemployment problem. No computation of the available data yields reliable figures. When examined closely they tend to wobble. (Presumably because of this difficulty or because of the unpleasantness of the present facts, the later draft of the fourth plan omits some of the relevant figures that used to be included in the previous plans). The problem can be further complicated by varying the definitions of the term 'unemployment'. One could arrive either at proportionately large or small figures. The sample surveys currently used by the Planning Commission take as their basis one day a week employment to classify the employed. On this basis naturally the resulting figures are low. Admittedly, the I.L.O. also uses a minimum of 15 hours a week employment as a criteria for the employed. But this



kind of sophisticated definition of unemployment is more relevant to the conditions in countries with developed economies, some of which provide unemployment benefits. In a general environment of affluence, individuals not earning a living wage have considerable reserve powers of sustenance.

### Misemployment

In our situation, specially for village-migrants to urban areas, unemployment can frequently be equated with starvation. In any case, for most of them even employment at prevailing price and wage rates means just existence above the bread-line. Moreover, there are the under-employed or others who are mal-employed; i.e., working part time, or accepting jobs below their qualifications like engineering graduates in the clerical profession (sometimes the reverse position is also true: those who are under-educated holding positions well above their competence. Probably of the two kinds of mal-employment the latter is more dangerous to society).

An acceptable definition of unemployed could be *an individual not being in a state of remunerative occupation despite his desire to be so*. The oft quoted figure for current unemployment is around ten million.<sup>1</sup> This seems a reasonable working figure. For, it represents approximately 2 per cent of the total population or 5 per cent of the current labour force (190 millions). A figure of this magnitude may be considered to be within the area of toleration. But even this figure is liable to suspicion. For, not all the unemployed or the job-seekers are registered with government employment exchanges. As stated earlier there are unspecified numbers of under-employed. One estimate puts them at 17 to 21 millions. But even if the under-employed are not considered as problematic politically, certainly the educated unemployed are—and very much so. According to the

source quoted earlier and also given in the poser article, the figure is around a million. Since, according to current sample-surveys the ratio of educated/uneducated is 20 per cent, this seems again a very reasonable figure.

What is indisputable is that the number of educated unemployed is increasing yearly not only because of their increase in absolute terms but also because since 1965 there has been a steady down-turn in the line of notified vacancies. Job opportunities are decreasing and in 1967-68 there were the highest number of educated job seekers about 5.6 per cent.

Percentage increases during the year (1968), in the different categories were:—<sup>2</sup>

Matriculates	13.2% as against 12.4% in 1966-67
Under-Graduates	22.6% as against 10.7% in 1966-67 and
Graduates	31.3% as against 17.8% in 1966-67

In 1963, for eight lakhs educated unemployed (i.e. matriculation and above) well over one lakh were placed in jobs. Today for nearly ten lakhs in the same category less than a lakh of jobs could be found. (Those who believe that unemployment is decreasing may consider why there were 11,000 applications for 25 posts as management trainees advertised recently by a company manufacturing oil engines.) It may be argued that the fate of the educated unemployed as against the uneducated needs greater attention because education has widened their areas of competence; because there has been greater investment in them (through education); because the decisions of a potential managerial executive can affect the fortunes of large numbers; i.e., if education is not a claim to employment it certainly buttresses it.

In fact, the poser article referred to their fate as the more tragic. This is questionable! For, the uneducated are deprived of both education and employment.

And all the unemployed are a waste of potential productive capacities. It is just a matter of degree. In our state of development we can ill afford to waste any human productive capacity. And in the long run the uneducated unemployed by their sheer magnitude will be politically more significant although their politicalisation may take place at a slower rate than that of the educated. (That is why I would tend to disregard the division between the educated and uneducated unemployed for the purposes of assessing their political implications and view the problem

from the larger context of all the unemployed.)

What is certain is that without cost benefit analysis being applied to education, the system is set on a course that is producing, and will produce, more than enough people with a general non-technical, non-professional education. Thus we are following a policy of erring on the side of over-supply (mostly with 'half-way degrees').

During the fourth plan there will be a predicted increase of 25 millions in the labour force. The fourth plan is expected to generate 18.5 to 19 million new jobs, i.e., unemployment will be increasing by a further 6 to 7 million. Adding the present back-log of 10 millions, it will make a total unemployed force of about 16 to 17 millions. According to one member of the Planning Commission, these estimates should be even higher. The present back-log is around 13 millions, by the end of 1970 it will be 27.4 million and by the end of 1979 it will be around 60 millions.

Even if the estimates vary there is no gainsaying that the invest-

1. Directorate General of Employment & Training, Employment Review, 1961 & (Min. of Labour, Employment & Rehabilitation, 1967).

2. Employment Review 1967-1968.

ment/employment ratio has declined over the past three plans: against an investment of Rs. 10,191 crores in the first and second plans, 17 million jobs were created (7 million in the agricultural sector and 12 million in the non-agricultural). In the third plan an investment of Rs. 10,400 crores resulted only in 14.5 million new jobs (4 million in the agricultural sector and 10.5 in the non-agricultural).

### Manpower Programme

Surely, one of the objectives of planning should be to provide employment for all job-seekers at a living wage. After making allowances for time-lags between the loss of a job and the finding of another, the economy should aim at equating the number of vacant jobs with the number of unemployed. After all, we have one of the longest, continuous, programmes of man-power strategy. Several institutions have been established for dealing with man-power questions so that overall economic and social development might not be impeded by imbalances. We are not looking for optimal plans in a utopia but seeking to provide the necessary minimum to all. For, unemployment is not only unutilised productive capacity but another form of mal-distribution of wealth. Therefore, in a welfare State the social injustice inherent in unemployment is sought to be remedied by the grant of doles or other benefits.

In a socialist State there is no unemployment theoretically and, therefore, beyond the scope of this essay. But in a State with a mixed economy like ours, unemployment can become an instrument in management/labour relations, the tilt depending upon the ideology at the helm. A little more tilt in the wrong direction could create a political force out of the unemployed. The direction in which this force will be channelled will depend upon the motivational impellants provided by the powers that be. It has been

said that the failure of the third plan marks the virtual collapse of political authority over our economy.

### Political Implications

Regarding the problem a little more closely, there is no doubt about the high rate of unemployment and literacy in Kerala and West Bengal. One is tempted to conclude that there is a correlation between the high degree of unemployment and the formation of Left-oriented governments. This conclusion would be reinforced if reliable statistics could be obtained about the unemployment situation in Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. One would find in all these States that the unemployment rate was high. (The exceptions to this pattern are Tamil Nadu and the Punjab where despite low percentages of unemployment, regional parties completely captured the reins of power.)

The explanation seems obvious. Support for the ruling party declined because doubts had crept in about its capacity to plan the economy and not only because of sudden shortfalls in agriculture: For, it is not only the unemployed who is affected by his situation in our society with its closely-knit families, parochial feelings and caste loyalties. A single unemployed individual affects three increasingly widening circles of voters: (a) family and close friends, (b) neighbours and groups around the home and (c) relations outside the village.

Increasing numbers of unemployed in a given group, given village, given caste over a period of time have roused a spirit of scepticism, specially in the promises of politicians. This credibility gap between the political organisations and electorate is widening. (The writer met identical kind of sceptical hostility in different States or different regions of the same State while canvassing in the 1967 elections. The reaction could be summed up as 'no politicians, no parties; we want food, we want jobs.' As the cor-

respondent of the *Times of India* (February 15, 1967) after a survey, wrote with some perspicacity. 'In the General Election this time there are no all-India issues as such—there are only all-India grievances centering on rising prices, which are creating country-wide privations and unrest. Foreign policy, defence, socialism, and self-reliance are not even major talking points. The people are concerned with food shortage, inflation, jobs...'

No amount of verbal papery can cover up the hard reality which the jobless have to face every day. If they are educated they have wider means of communication and, consequently, can project their frustrations and privations over a larger area. The political scepticism fanned by the educated, trickles down to the semi-educated and finally reaches the uneducated (or is it the other way round?), creating an atmosphere of disbelief and resentment.

### Politics as Profession

The fact that some of the unemployed may become party workers or others may join political parties to obtain employment does not invalidate what has been stated in the previous paragraphs. Those who find employment through political parties are marginal and therefore hardly scratch the skin of the problem and, frequently, when they do, only increase the hostility of those who are better qualified but lack the necessary god-parents.

Nepotism of any kind and other irregularities are particularly abhorrent to the younger generation. Although the reasons for the current youth and student unrest are complex, one of the key factors is the prospect of unemployment at the end of their education that many students dread. Society has trained them to regard education as a spring-board to occupation and has not oriented them towards self-employment, except in a very small circle of the new middle class that has arisen from refugee settlers. Job security is

highly prized at every stage as evidenced even by marriage advertisements in the columns of Sunday papers.

Moreover, if they come from a rural background their problem can be further aggravated by the fact that their parents may have had to borrow finances for their education, with the expectation of repayment after the completion of studies. Unemployment then can make education appear as fruitless investment for the parents and a source of perpetual worry to the students.

#### Psychological Factor

There are also other psychological factors like value-disorientation and enforced suppression of natural aggressiveness which confront the growing child. During the educational phase his system of rewards is very different to the one he finds in the non-protected world outside. There is a large disjunction between the process of education and the wider social system. Whilst in the educational field he is rewarded simply on the basis of his academic, sporting, or other abilities, in the wider world he finds that rewards are not related to achievement, hard work, or ability but other factors like family connections, caste and so on play a significant part.

At an earlier stage when he is more involved in the family circle, he is brought up in an over-protective environment coupled with a hierarchical structure which forces him to suppress his natural instinct towards aggressiveness or combativeness. Even at the university level frequently he has no sporting facilities to teach him to pattern and channel his aggressiveness. Therefore, he grows up frequently into a little bomb compounded of frustration, insecurity and aggressiveness ready to go up any moment. All he now requires is a political detonator. Unemployment may not be the detonator but could well prove to be the prerequisite to detonation.

It will not do for the elders to look back to the pre-independence

days when they willingly accepted unemployment. This kind of willingness cannot be expected in the post-independence period. Independence now means sharing of the social produce. Unemployment is denial of the share to which every individual component of the State feels entitled.

#### Vicious Circle

As stated earlier, unemployment is a form of mal-distribution of wealth. When goods to be shared are not enough for all the claimants, what might be called the vicious socio-economic circle of underdevelopment comes into operation: when the total wealth is improperly distributed, the preservation of democratic consensus becomes less and less possible: when consensus begins to erode, it undermines the effectiveness of government: with less effectiveness, a government's capacity to promote economic development is weakened: when economic development slacks, it increases the shortages of goods (even without a galloping rate of population growth).

In the final analysis, unemployment is much more than a denial of economic goods. It is a deprivation of the opportunity to an individual to fulfil his social obligations for which his education and other endowments have qualified him. And this need to fulfil himself in society is a deep rooted human quality which can be ignored at the greatest of peril.

For, this deep social craving stirs forces which only those feeling dispossessed can generate. Resorting to violence today in Andhra, Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, Maharashtra or Tamil Nadu are not only the 'anti-social elements'—there is a large percentage of white collars, mostly young. The educated unemployed may no longer be content to 'turn first pink and then, red' as the poser suggests. They may well spark an explosion with foreseeable consequences.

# For development

K. R. SIVARAMAKRISHNAN

TWO aspects of the current unemployment of educated persons in India stand out from the point of view of manpower planning: first, the quantitative demand for, and supply of, educated manpower at different levels and in several groups; the second is the more general, but basic, aspect of utilisation of manpower for national development. The former arises from the concept of manpower being a 'derivative' of economic parameters while the other assu-

mes manpower as a resource to be usefully exploited for development.\*

We propose to deal with the latter aspect in this article with

\*Any views expressed in this article are those of the author; they should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Institute of Applied Manpower Research. The author acknowledges his gratitude to Professor Frederick Harbison with whom he had discussions in October last on aspects of manpower utilisation and a Systems Analysis Approach to human resource development planning.

reference to the growing number of educated persons seeking jobs and the capacity of the economy to gainfully absorb their services. The main purpose of doing so will be to evoke sufficient awareness of the fact that it is not only feasible, but also important, to develop and utilise manpower for national development.

### The Only Solution

There can hardly be any doubt that the only long-term solution to the problem of unemployment is economic growth, the rate of which depends, *inter alia*, upon the extent to which the population explosion is restrained. The impact of the intensification of the family planning programme in the third plan on the rate of growth of the population will, however, be felt only after the fifth plan period. There has been rapid expansion of educational facilities and a number of institutions have already been established which would make steady additions to the stock of educated manpower year after year; currently this stock is increasing at an annual rate of 7 per cent.

This would mean the dimensions of the labour force and the proportion of the educated persons thereof are predetermined for the next decade; the total labour force, estimated at about 194 million in 1969 will increase to about 250 million in 1979. The out-turn of educated persons, which is of the order of 1.5 million today is expected to double itself during the same period. It is within this unalterable framework that we have to consider the question of educated unemployment in the next decade.

Unemployment, by the ILO definition, is involuntary idleness due to lack of work, excluding idleness due, for example, to labour disputes, illness or vacations. Even though national definitions differ in this regard, such differences relate only to the period of reference, i.e., how long a person must

have been workless before he is considered unemployed. In actual practice, however, the requirements of maintaining appropriate statistics of the unemployed has tended to limit the concept of unemployment as relating only to the category of wage earners. Applying this concept to the educated amongst the new entrants to the labour force, it is said that the educated unemployed consist of all persons who have successfully completed at least the secondary level education and who are without a job although seeking one.

Putting it differently, this would seem to imply that, from the employment point of view, the aim of an educated person is to seek and get a job, i.e., as a wage-paid employee. The emphasis placed on wage employment deserves mention, not only because it restricts the area of work open to educated manpower, and thus distorts the concept of employment, but also because of the influence it has exerted, directly and indirectly, upon the educational system and perpetuated the orientation of education, by and large, towards wage employment.

### In Urban Areas

Wage employment characterises the structure of the urban areas: according to the 1961 Census, the percentage of 'employees' in the urban areas was 62.7 for male and 53.6 for female groups as against 44.5 and 26.5 respectively for the rural areas in which the 'single workers' and the 'family workers' constituted the major group. Consequently, the employment and unemployment of the educated persons is significant with reference to the urban areas. It is estimated that the educated formed 28 per cent of the total unemployment in urban areas compared with 3 per cent in the rural areas. This is not surprising because urban unemployment is also fed by an inflow of persons from rural areas.

The modern sector, comprising the more productive enterprises,

government establishments and government supported services such as education and health, most of which is concentrated in urban areas, and with its high wages and high productivity relative to the other sectors, has provided the incentive in this regard. Thus, we have the spectacle of the educated persons, from both rural and urban areas, who, because of their wage-employment-oriented education and of social values, converge in the urban areas for jobs in the modern sector, be it as government civil servants, teachers or employees in relatively modern industrial and commercial establishments.

### The Modern Sector

Against the background of the above pattern of job seekers, we may analyse the employment structure in the modern sector. Out of the total labour force in India of 194 millions, 84 per cent or 162 millions are in the rural areas as against 16 per cent or 32 millions in the urban areas. The modern sector, which provides the main employment structure in the urban areas, employs about 23 millions or less than 12 per cent of the labour force. Based on intra-country studies and empirical calculations, Professor Harbison considers it 'logical' to expect that the labour force in the modern sector in a developing country would increase at a rate not exceeding 3 per cent per annum. This is about the same order as, if not lower than, the rate at which the urban labour force is expected to grow in India in the future.

Assuming the rule of thumb of Arthur Lewis, this will mean an annual rate of 9 per cent in the output from this sector which is more or less the same as implied in the long-term projections made in the Draft of the fourth five-year plan (1969-74). It is obvious, therefore, that, between now and 1979, the modern sector will barely hold its own in absorbing its increments in the total labour force. Quantitatively, the additional employment opportunities each

year in this sector will be around 100,000 which is less than 7 per cent of the present annual out-turn of educated manpower.

### Unrealistic Concept

The resources devoted to the creation and maintenance of the educational institutions in India are indeed tremendous. They appear even larger when it is noted that the system of formal education is oriented almost exclusively to the modern sector which accounts hardly for 12 per cent of the labour force. The concept of educated manpower from this point of view is unrealistic, incomplete and capable of refinement.

If, as we have seen, the modern sector is not likely to absorb most of the additional out-turn during the next decade, it is imperative that we look for increased employment opportunities in the traditional sector (which accounts for over two-thirds of the labour force) and the intermediate or 'middle-band' sector (which covers small-scale service, industrial, construction and transport enterprises). In urban areas, these sectors provide rather limited scope for additional employment, perhaps not exceeding 10 per cent, consistent with the already low levels of productivity and the already high level of urban educated unemployment. Higher priority should then be given in the future to expansion of output and employment in the intermediate and traditional sectors in the rural areas which will have to absorb nearly three-fourths of the country's labour force during the next decade, including a substantial number of educated persons.

The suggestion for increasing emphasis on the promotion of rural employment is neither new nor original; it has been recognised as one of the means of integrating employment objectives with long-term economic planning in developing countries. The ILO has made detailed studies in this regard and recommended the planned

modernisation of the traditional and intermediate sectors in rural areas as a positive measure for providing additional productive employment. Such a rural transformation involves much more than agricultural development. It requires village development including extension of health and education services, expansion of village trading and commerce, the creation of local industries for processing agricultural products, the improvement of housing, water-supply, roads, sanitation and other public services.

### Rural Transformation

A rural transformation also calls for a massive programme of rural public works including construction of access roads, irrigation canals, communication systems and the like. These would help in raising the standards of living and productivity and, as a result, retaining educated manpower in rural areas according to a regenerative process. Characteristically, such development activities require large amounts of labour, an increasing proportion of it being educated. Thus, rural transformation combines the urgent need for development in the rural areas, where 75 per cent of the people live, with work opportunities to the increasing number of educated manpower needing such opportunities. It is not, however, the intention in this article to describe or discuss the types of projects and activities that constitute a major programme of such transformation or to examine their employment and manpower dimensions.

The implications of bringing about such a rural transformation are indeed enormous for the educational system. It has to build up an organised body of knowledge relating to the entire field of development economics relating to rural areas. There is, at present, insufficient knowledge about the art or science of rural development, of the characteristics and processes of rural community development or of the sociological

forces which motivate and sustain self-improvement in rural areas. The role of education has to be re-evaluated in the total programme of national development with special reference to rural transformation.

As the Education Commission recently pointed out, the progress of modernisation will be directly related to the pace of educational progress. This would mean not only diversification and vocationalisation of the educational system to meet the manpower requirements for rural development, but also the promotion of appropriate values among the students at all stages of education. Without the right value-orientation in the educational programme, it would be difficult to motivate and utilise educated manpower for the wide range of services required to bring about the changes in rural areas in a meaningful manner. Next, but not unrelated to the above, the educational system has to create in the students the spirit of entrepreneurship and leadership and the urge and confidence for self-employment. An educated person has to look for more and more avenues for the creation of wealth rather than be after wage employment.

### Organisation Builders

The crux of the whole problem of rural transformation is the husbanding and organising of all resources in the community and utilising them optimally for the proposed development activities. This would call for leaders and 'organisation builders', who are, at the same time, innovators and change-agents. No system other than education can give this high level leadership. Further, the educational system should also be able to anticipate the specific manpower categories required, and can be used, for rural development. At present, most of the manpower surveys have focused on high level manpower requirements of the modern sector. There are no data even about the strategic skills required for modernising the low productivity sectors or about the

ways in which such skills could be generated.

#### Local Assistance

The types of development activities that could be promoted in rural areas would also require financial resources. For this, there has to be a positive policy in the five-year plans for allocating definite resources for rural development, as a part of the overall strategy of development. At the same time, the local resources can be mobilised by adopting a campaign approach to the whole programme; it has been our experience that adequate response is generally forthcoming from the local community for any development project with clear and tangible benefits. The school improvement projects and community support in Madras may be cited as an instance. According to a Planning Commission report on the subject, local assistance has been substantial and continuous though in various forms. Local contributions have helped the undertaking of a large number of projects in schools, ranging from mid-day meals and school uniforms to the provision of teaching aids and laboratory equipment.

In the light of what has been stated so far, one conclusion becomes irresistible, that educated manpower in the present context in India has been reduced to a problem of unemployment and left exposed to a policy of drift and helplessness. If, however, it is seen in the other perspective, which seems to be more reasonable and realistic, educated unemployment would turn out to be an opportunity for, and a challenge to, the ingenuity of the Indian people and leaders to make use of the available human resources for rapid development especially of that sector in which most of the people live. The only alternative to this, at least for the next decade or so, would be an ever increasing stock of educated unemployed persons who tend 'to turn, first, pink and then, red'.

We may also consider here, though briefly, the question of the

unemployment amongst engineers. This is a category which is highly oriented towards, and dependent upon, the modern sector in the urban areas and as such different from the general case discussed earlier. The distinction also arises because of the fact that the stock of engineering graduates and diploma holders has been increased during the past decade as a result of deliberate efforts made in the plans to expand facilities for engineering education in relation to estimates of future demand for such personnel. As the third five-year plan states in the field of technical education, each plan is the preparation for the next.

#### Engineers

A common assumption implied in all the methods used for estimating future demand was that a certain number of engineers was 'required' to meet the demand of production of goods and services as set out in the plan. The methods were therefore linked to certain economic factors, such as the rate of growth of industrial production, and in sectors which are 'engineering intensive'. On the anticipation that the engineering intensive sectors of the economy would increase at an average rate of about 11 per cent per year between 1960-61 and 1975-76, and that an additional allowance of 2 per cent per year was required to meet replacement needs arising from deaths, retirements, etc., the stock of engineering graduates and diploma-holders was planned to increase at an annual rate of 13 per cent from a base of 133,000 engineers at the end of 1960. As a result, we have, today, a stock of 332,000 engineers and an annual out-turn of 44,000.

Industrial development did not, however, increase at the postulated rate but declined to an annual growth rate of less than 8 per cent during the third five-year plan: there has thus been an imbalance between the planned out-turn from the engineering educational system and the actual off-take by engineer-using sectors. As any corrective action introduced in the educational system takes 3 to 5

years to bring about necessary adjustments in the supply of engineering manpower, two factors act in the interregnum cumulatively adding to the number of unemployed engineers, viz., an out-turn from engineering institutions, increasing progressively at a rate of 13 per cent and the sudden decline in the employment opportunities for engineers following the recession in the economy.

This resulted in an abnormal increase in the number of unemployed engineers estimated at 56,700 as of today. Even if the economy grows at a rate of 5.5 per cent per year, as hopefully stated in the Draft fourth five-year plan (1969-1974), it is unlikely that sufficient demand would be generated to absorb gainfully the 190,000 additional engineering graduates and diploma-holders who will be entering the labour force during the next five years. The present indications are that the number of unemployed engineering graduates and diploma-holders might exceed 100,000 by the end of the fourth plan.

#### The Trial

The current unemployment among engineers was as unexpected as its cause, the recession. Nevertheless, this has forced on us a need to consider ways and means of utilising them in areas and activities which did not throw up the 'demand' in the earlier manpower plans. A 14-point programme has recently been approved, incorporating schemes which are manpower intensive and not all of which are oriented towards the modern sector. The technical education system is being called upon to turn out engineers more and more for self-employment and less for wage employment. If these are being done for engineers today, we can hopefully look forward in the future to similar enlightenment with reference to the total human resources. Some one has said that we do not know what education could do for us, because we have never tried it; we are poised for a trial now. Can the result be the unexpected?

# Books

**TWO STUDIES IN EDUCATION** By A. R. Kamat.  
Asia Publishing House, 1968.

The multitude of the products of Indian universities is faced with the problem of earning its livelihood. Several experiments so far suggested to deal with the alarming growth of unemployment among the educated young men and women, have borne no tangible results. Every now and then, an exasperated dignitary even declares that most of the unemployed are really unemployable.

One of the remedies recommended by the UNESCO experts was 'technological-orientation' of the country's educational system. And amidst their glassy-eyed worship of whatever the foreigners prescribe for us, the Indian leaders did not notice that they were creating a new and even more serious and painful type of unemployment, this time among the technologists.

As soon as we discovered that the economic recession did not explain the whole of this phenomenon, we turned to the planners. The poor devils, the planners, had already thoroughly discredited the theory that unemployment during the recent years was due to economic recession. It is, of course, disconcerting to discover that the planners had no clearer vision of the future than the vote-hungry politician. The way the Planning Commission has lightly treated employment in the fourth plan draft, has already aroused Parliament's indignation.

Another high-level committee was appointed to examine the causes of growing unemployment among the highly educated persons. Its interim report that 'over-production' by the country's universities is primarily responsible for the ailment can hardly be accepted as correct because while many competent hands are looking desperately for employment, many positions paradoxically remain unfilled. Does this not mean that India has not yet planned her economic programme in terms of available manpower resources? The number of educated persons, especially scientists and engineers, needed in India should be very large if we really mean business. This should confirm the doubt that many an educated youth remains out of employment, in spite of vacancies, because of vested interests and procedural delays.

The University Grants Commission and the annual get-togethers of the Vice Chancellors, are more

'worried' (it is not always true that they are really worried!) about falling standards than the mass unemployment and underemployment among educated persons. Why none of these 'educationists' (it is taken for granted that a Vice Chancellor is an educationist!) has been bold enough to say that the unemployment and underemployment among the educated people are the results of a deep-rooted malady in our economic system and we cannot wash our hands off the problem by just shifting the balance on education or making it difficult to pass a university examination in the name of improving the standard of education, is no remedy?

The problem of unemployment was not tackled. Instead, another serious problem of mass-failure overtook the academic world with a colossal waste of manpower in terms of time, energy and money. Frustration and youthful restlessness came in train. The tradition and establishment now found a new and more menacing challenge. A National Policy on Education was evolved but it soon got lost in the politico-linguistic controversy.

In the midst of this confusion, Poona University took the bold step of reforming the examination system by introducing 'Internal Assessment' as part of the total score a candidate is required to obtain in a subject, in the final examination. The lecturers teaching various subjects were given the freedom to award to their pupils twenty per cent of the total marks. This has come as a great relief to the marginal students. The pass percentage has considerably gone up. The teachers as well as students have hailed the new scheme, as has been proved by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics in its recent publication *Two Studies in Education*—a compact report of the two surveys.

An important consequence of the reformed examination is that the co-efficient of correlation between internal assessment and the external assessment has not been found very large. This should discount the apprehension that, 'left to the class-teacher, the examinations would be reduced to a farce.' The powers that be would be well-advised to launch 'employment programmes' as a part of the general economic policy to provide jobs to the increased pass percentage of youth. Other universities need to follow the Poona lead.

The magnitude of the waste caused by educated unemployment would be better realised when we come to know the cost of a graduate these days.



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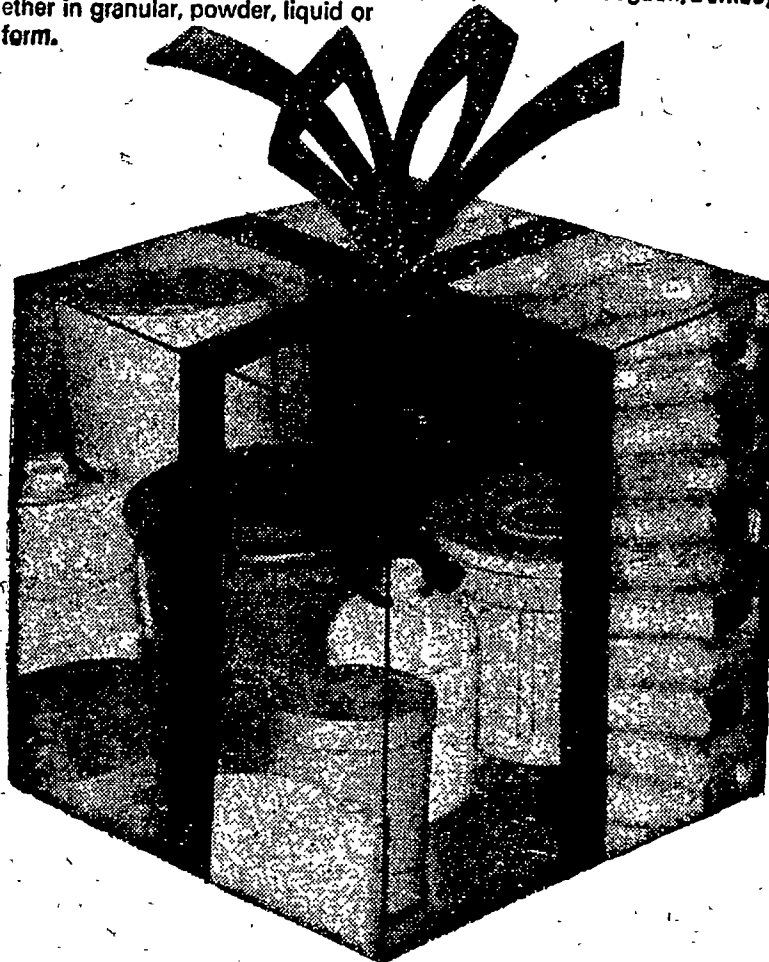
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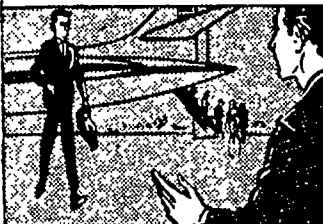


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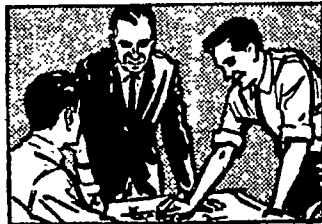
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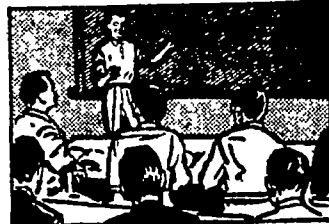
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The second part of this book deals with the cost of collegiate and university education.

On an average, the institutional cost alone comes to about Rs 1,500 per student per annum, excluding the pocket allowance, hostel expenses and other miscellaneous expenses incurred by the college students. If the non-official estimates are to be trusted, at present about ten lakh graduates are without jobs; the country has spent about Rs 15 crores on them—what for? And as the output of the universities mounts numerically, the total amount in the 'wastage-pool' multiplies. As the Report of the Labour Commission Study Group observes: 'Even assuming the most optimum growth of economy, the present number of educated work-seekers would increase to almost 1.6 million in 1975-76.' Can the country afford this and more that must be a logical consequence of such a vulnerable situation?

Significantly, the per pupil cost of Law and Commerce courses has been estimated to be lower than even the ordinary Arts courses. This, perhaps, is due to the heavier classes and bigger teacher-pupil ratio in the Law and Commerce colleges. But the graduates in these faculties too are in the grip of unemployment. We cannot afford to turn out more of these types simply because their education costs less.

There is sound reason in the demand from the youth quarters that India needs to provide for 'unemployment doles' to all those educated persons who are qualified to work and are eager to take up jobs but are not gainfully engaged. What has happened to the Union Education Ministry's proposal to constitute a 'Technical Corps' to provide unemployment relief to the technical hands without jobs? This scheme can be extended to all the unemployed educated Indians. The plan to orient the collegiate education through the proposed National Service Corps is fraught with the defects of its predecessors—cum-counterparts like the N.C.C.

C. R. Rathee

**INDIAN SCIENTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES: A Stock Study.**

**INDIAN PHYSICIANS IN THE UNITED STATES: A Stock Study.**

**MIGRATION OF INDIAN ENGINEERS, SCIENTISTS AND PHYSICIANS TO THE UNITED STATES.**  
Institute of Applied Manpower Research.

Compared to the total number of the scientific and technical personnel produced by Indian universities and educational institutions, although the number of those going abroad is not very big, the tendency among them to settle down there for good is, no doubt, a matter for concern. And the tendency is growing. Wrongly called, it is not a drain, it's a serious loss.

The full details of all those migrating, permanently or temporarily, to various advanced countries like

the USA, the UK, West Germany, etc., are not available. But the figures, howsoever inconclusive, available in those countries, particularly in respect of those desiring permanent or, at least, a longer stay there, is alarming. For example, according to a CSIR survey (1968), about 2,000 Indian scientific and technical personnel including doctors and nurses migrate to the UK annually.<sup>1</sup>

Again, according to Dr. Klaus Wyneken, head of the Department of Technical Training for University Students of the German Academic Exchange Service, there were about 2,000 Indian students in West Germany in 1967-68.<sup>2</sup> That is a different matter that because of racial pulls and restrictive immigration laws in the UK, the Bonn policy of sending them back after studies and discouraging permanent settlement, and the CSIR's selective policy of bringing back Indian scientists as advocated by its Director-General, Dr. Atma Ram,<sup>3</sup> most of our young aspirants have to suppress their ambitions and return home.

Though confined to the US, if a recent study of the problem by the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi, is considered an index, the magnitude of the loss, at least in quality, will be evident. The Institute deputed one of its senior research officers, S. P. Awasthi, to the US to go into the problem in depth and collect statistical data in this regard.

According to the IAMR study, there were 1,316 registrants in the States at the end of 1966. Of these, 314 or 23.86 per cent had taken or were likely to take American citizenship. The rest of them had not taken a final decision regarding permanent settlement there. Besides, an analysis of the registrants by their citizenship or 'visa status' indicated that 635 or 48.3 per cent of them had acquired the status which had paved or could pave the way for their stay there on a permanent footing. The other 51.7 per cent held non-immigrant visas or temporary residence visas. Again, of the 635 registrants, 450 held immigrant or permanent residence visas and the rest were naturalised citizens. Relinquishing Indian citizenship to take over US citizenship is an unmistakable indication of the desire to settle down in the States, as the study report correctly asserts and adds: 'The degree of finality attached to both types of visa status—immigrants and non-immigrants—is, however, much less.'<sup>4</sup>

The report reveals that 'the permanent resident visa-holders stand on the same footing as the naturalised citizens; they too can settle down permanently in the United States if they wish.

1. 'The Times of India', 27-11-68.

2. 'The Statesman', 6-11-68.

3. 'Amrita Bazar Patrika', 8-4-67.

4. *Indian Scientists in the United States: A Stock Study* (IAMR) P. 21

Whether they would choose to do so, however, is an open question. A permanent resident visa-holder, legally speaking, continues to maintain his original citizenship and provided he is holding a valid passport, can return to his native land any time he likes. For this reason, the mere possession of a permanent resident visa cannot be taken as conclusive evidence of permanent migration except in cases where such aliens have also applied for citizenship.<sup>5</sup> And this is not difficult as under the US immigration law one can apply for citizenship after five years' stay as an immigrant.

Lest the small number of Indians settled in the US permanently creates a different notion and minimises the gravity of the issue, it must be kept in mind that there is a fixed quota of immigrants allowed for Indians and the quota is quite low, only 100. But the aspirants can easily escape this limit as the US Government has been giving special permission to non-immigrants, eligible for permanent residence there, to stay on until such time as they could be covered by the quota. And 'increasingly larger numbers have been soliciting change of status to that of an immigrant.'<sup>6</sup>

The case of doctors is a little different. There were 1,877 Indian, medical graduates in the US, most of whom, 1,472, were receiving post-graduate training. The rest of them, 405, were engaged in either private practice or salaried jobs. Only 25 per cent of these were in private practice and this small number is explained by the fact that most of the States in America insist on US citizenship for private practice.

However, the study, reveals that 117 of the 405 non-trainees had become naturalised US citizens while those in salaried jobs, about 300, are not likely to stay on a permanent basis because of non-availability of citizenship required for private practice. Besides, most of the trainees, working as interns and residents in hospitals, hold exchange visitors' visas and would be permitted to stay only for a maximum period of five years after which they will have to return home.<sup>7</sup>

Hence, on the basis of this IAMR study, if the problem of 'brain drain' is to be solved by positive incentives to Indian scientific and technical personnel abroad to return home, it is the group of permanent residents and non-immigrants soliciting change of status to that of immigrants, that needs priority consideration.

Unfortunately, the study is silent both on the matter of motivation for Indians' tendency to stay abroad and the possible incentives that can help their repatriation. These aspects of the problem were beyond its scope and range. Yet, Dr. Atma

Ram has, in so many words, said that 'some of the foreign-trained Indians ask for high salaries and preferential treatment...and it is difficult to make an over-all differentiation between the performance quality of those trained abroad and in India. The difference in performance is generally personal.'<sup>8</sup> Besides, according to a CSIR survey (1968) of the socio-economic background of Indian scientists (including those working in national laboratories, government and private industrial research institutions, universities and colleges), they earn 17 per cent of the average US scientist. This earning is the lowest in State government jobs and highest in private industrial establishments. Over 55 per cent earn less than Rs. 500 per month, 34.5 per cent less than Rs. 1,099 per month and 7.1 per cent Rs. 1,100 per month and above.

In contrast, the average US scientist earns Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 9,000 per month. An Indian scientist working under a State Government, entering the profession at the age of between 21 and 30 years, starts with a salary of Rs. 200 to Rs. 400 and hopes to earn Rs. 700 per month at the age of 45, working in a national laboratory, he ends with a salary of Rs. 925, while in a private firm his earnings are in four figures. As a result, most of the professional scientists have to supplement their income. Besides, most of the scientists, 89 per cent, come from low-income families which have or had nothing to do with science or scientific activity.<sup>9</sup>

In these circumstances, Dr. Triguna Sen, former Education Minister, was not quite wrong when he told the Lok Sabha that instead of lamenting over Dr. Khorana's deserting India, we should address ourselves to the need of retaining the brain we still had and in this context he reminded that a scientist could not live by patriotism alone. But he does not also live by money alone, is equally true. He also needs a particular kind of climate, in laboratory as well as in society. Is the country, including the State, prepared to provide that climate where he really feels he is a scientist as well as an Indian, where his individuality is not allowed to be lost in the abstract collectivity of patriotism, where loss is not confused with drain?

S. N. Munshi

#### YOUTH CHALLENGE UNEMPLOYMENT.

New Generation Publication, 1969.

It is strange that few youth organisations seem to have paid any serious attention to the problem of promoting a higher political consciousness and solidarity among the jobless and of organising them into a force.

However, the left-wing organisations, the All India Youth Federation and the All India

5. Ibid. P. 21

6. Ibid, P. 22

7. *Indian Physicians in the United States: A Stock Study (IAMR).*

8. 'Amrita Bazar Patrika', 8-4-67

9. 'National Herald', 24-10-68

Students' Federation, have recently started working in this direction. They have been holding conferences of the unemployed youth in different parts of the country and arranging seminars and discussions on the problem and its causes.

These organisations regard the growing menace of unemployment in India as an inevitable offspring of the growing capitalism in the country. In December 1968, the two organisations sponsored a National Convention of Youth and Students against Unemployment, the purpose of which was to 'evolve specific slogans for initiating a nation-wide campaign against unemployment, for the problem of jobs has become too real and too burning an issue to be treated as a subject for mere academic discourse.' The book under review contains the papers placed and documents adopted in the Convention.

The basis of discussion at the Convention was a report on the problem of unemployment, submitted by the sponsoring organisations. The report defines the approach to be adopted towards the problem.

'During the three five-year plans', the report reads, 'India has witnessed the queer phenomenon of the growth of capitalism with all its appalling manifestations'. The country has seen the growth of a few monopoly business houses, hoarding, black-marketing and tax evasion. Profits of the business houses have shot up. On the other side, the common man is becoming poorer everyday. Unemployment, the report further says, is an inherent part of capitalism, irrespective of the fact whether the country is affluent or backward. Even the economy of the highly developed capitalist countries is having a heavy deadweight of unemployment on its shoulder.

This, in general, is the approach taken in the report towards the problem of unemployment. Regarding the 'big talk' about population explosion and birth control as 'just a hoax', the report stresses that there is no race between population and food supply, and that if there is any race it is between population and economic growth. As regards the economic growth in the last two decades, the report says that the benefit of this growth has been deprived for the common man by the monopolists, black-marketeers, hoarders, wholesale traders, landlords and others.

The report advocates a youth and student campaign against unemployment demanding the commencement of the fourth five-year plan which should have eradication of unemployment as one of its primary objectives, rapid industrialisation, immediate land reforms and so on.

The book also includes a paper by S. Ganguli and Aurobindo Ghose, lecturers of economics at the Delhi University. The authors believe that the unemployment which the Indian economy faces today

stems from two sets of causes which are characteristic of underdeveloped economies and that of developed capitalist economies. 'In the case of underdeveloped economies the fundamental cause of unemployment arises from the *supply* side, whereas in the case of the developed capitalist economies the basic cause is on the *demand* side.' The problem of unemployment in India, the authors stress, is a direct result of the capitalist path of development of the Indian economy.

Unemployment afflicts not only the urban and educated youth: it is acute in the rural sector as well. It calls for greater concern in view of the fact that about 70 per cent of the Indian population is still in the rural sector. Ghose and Ganguli have made a revealing survey of the extent of employment created in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in the first, second and third five-year plans. The survey shows that new employment created in the agricultural sector is extremely meagre in comparison to the vast unemployment in this sector. Further, new employment opportunities have been cut down recently, since the rural works programmes have been cut down. The authors are highly critical of what is known as the 'new agricultural policy'. They believe that the new agricultural policy, through the creation of capitalist farming and due to the limited nature of its scope, will aggravate rural unemployment. It will create regional unemployment.

In the industrial sector there has emerged a new category of the unemployed, that of the *newly* unemployed. These are the people who have been thrown out of jobs because of lay-offs and retrenchments at various industrial establishments.

As regards the educated unemployed, the authors emphasise the continuously rising out-turn of engineering graduates and diploma-holders and the correspondingly rising unemployment of these new engineers. 'It is illusory to think that this is just a short-run problem and that it would disappear over time. On the contrary, rising unemployment of engineers is a particular aspect of the general slow-down of the overall growth of the economy.'

The authors, in keeping with their diagnosis of the problem, conclude that the solution of the problem of unemployment lies only in rapid industrialisation. 'And rapid industrialisation is not possible without *socialist industrialisation*. The struggle for unemployment in India today has a meaning only if it is the struggle for the socialist transformation of the economy.'

Among the other papers published in this report are the papers on unemployment among agricultural workers and on unemployment among women. The booklet also includes a 'Manifesto of Youth on Jobs' and a charter of demands, adopted by the Convention.

Javed Malik

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# Communication

• Aside from blurring the distinction between policy and relations of a country, SEMINAR'S issue on 'Our External Relations' (July 1969), makes a few points, particularly in Romesh Thapar's piece, which need a more careful and balanced examination.

To say that India and China have fallen out on account of 'some minor border problems' is to exhibit obliviousness to deeper and wider causes of the conflict between the two largest countries of Asia. It needs to be emphasized that among other things, the real cause of conflict is that China does not want India to develop into a competitor in power and influence particularly in Asia. Also, India and China present two different paths to modernization and progress. If the Indian experiment through democracy and socialism succeeds, it would be a path-finder to other Asians and Africans and that in turn would amount to a challenge to the Chinese way and system.

Again, I have my own reservations about the view that 'probably Peking will seek normality with her Asian neighbours in an effort to salvage her dignity with the super powers.' Who knows, it may be the other way round. China may come to terms with the super powers in order to increase her pressure and influence over her Asian neighbours. It is significant that while keeping a consistently hostile posture against India, China has allowed its representatives to have hundreds of meetings with the American representatives in Warsaw in order continuously to probe the American mind. If this happens, China's normalization of relations with the super powers may be a danger to Asians.

While pleading for normalization of relations with China, a point which can hardly be contested, it is urged that we should not 'romanticize China' as 'a revolution has been turned into a coup' and as 'a military junta rules today over that great land and people'. It is this sort of thinking which has landed American foreign policy planners into a mess in Asia. It would lead to disastrous results if India's foreign policy is founded upon such a fanciful belief. The Chinese, perhaps more than any other people in the world, are proud of their history and tradition and as a people are utterly convinced of their greatness. It is in the shadow of these firmly held ideas

that China has defied the two poles in a now mute and muffled bipolar international system and it is forging ahead on the road to progress. Hence, in a foreign policy, planning based on the assumption that things would radically change after Mao may not be helpful, though by saying so the importance of the present Chinese leadership is not being belittled.

It is a debatable belief that 'the earlier cult of Asian solidarity which characterized the fifties is again (?) returning'. The circumstances in which the Bandung Conference was organized were peculiar, but even there differences between the participants were clearly evident and the Conference could be held largely because the bond of anti-colonialism was strong at that time. With the substantial liquidation of colonialism, that bond has disappeared. Now there is no common bond strong enough to bring the Asians together. The Algiers' fiasco of 1965 brought this situation into the sharpest ever focus. It would be unwarranted to treat the present talk of Asian cooperation in certain countries of the region as a sign of well-thought-out positive initiative; rather it is a poor, *ad hoc*, and half-hearted reaction to what the USA, the USSR, and China are planning and doing in order to achieve their foreign policy objectives without much care for the interests of Asians as such. For instance, a recent suggestion by Brezhnev, whatever its details, is an effort to meet the problems which China is posing for the Soviet Union.

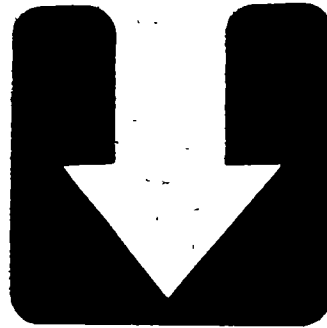
The political systems of Asia are beset with formidable domestic and inter-Asian cleavages on account of a variety of factors. The major powers are adding fuel to the fire. I am not sure if it is correct to say that there is a new awakening about the implications of the role of major powers. Most Asians have been conscious of their game, but they have been unable to counteract their designs, partly because of their helplessness and partly because the ruling elite in some countries has treated those designs as beneficial to their country. It seems that the whole tenor of the argument in favour of Asian solidarity is unwarrantedly optimistic and hence a guide of dubious value for India.

K. P. MISRA

Indian School of International  
Studies, New Delhi.

# seminar

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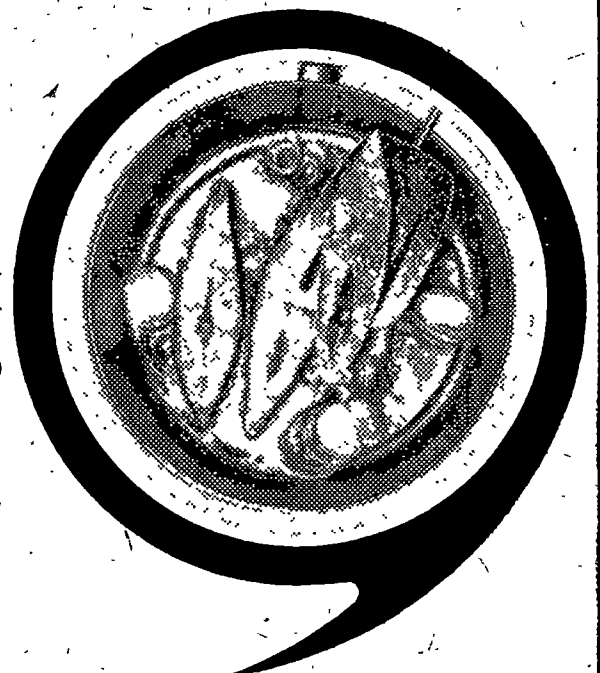
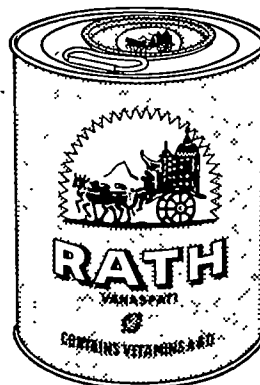


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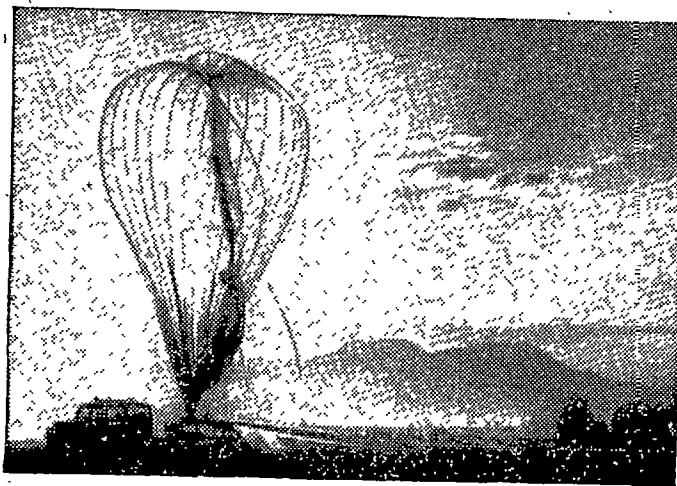
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# 121

## THE CONGRESS PARTY

a symposium on  
aspects of the crisis  
facing the ruling party

symposium participants

### THE PROBLEM

Posed by Gopal Krishna, Senior Fellow,  
Centre for the Study of Developing Societies

### AREAS OF RECOVERY

Satish K. Arora, teaching at the National  
Institute of Community Development

### HISTORICAL RECORD

E.P.W. da Costa, Director,  
Indian Institute of Public Opinion

### ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

P.N. Dhar, Director,  
Institute of Economic Growth

### CHECKING THE DRIFT

Rasheeduddin Khan, Professor of  
Political Science, Osmania University

### CLARITY OF PURPOSE

Chandra Shekhar, Member of  
the Congress Parliamentary Party

### BOOKS

Reviewed by D.R. Goyal,  
Seminarist and Ved Gupta

### FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography  
compiled by D.C. Sharma

### COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury

The very first issue of SEMINAR, ten years ago, was a discussion on the party in power. We thought it relevant today to publish another such issue which would capture the impact of a decade on the ruling party. But, the best of plans can be disturbed by sudden developments. Indira Gandhi's decision to assert her leadership of the party during the last month of August finds only marginal reflection in this issue of SEMINAR, but the material presented provides a picture of the problems to be resolved if the Congress Party is to be restored its lost prestige.

## The problem

ONE of the positive aspects of Indian political life has been the stability the country has enjoyed under the overall dominance of the Congress Party since independence. This stability rested on the programmatic consensus built by Jawaharlal Nehru on the basis of a national commitment to democracy, secularism and economic development with an accent on social justice, and on the all-embracing Congress Party. The party was and continues to be the only truly national party, not only in its aspirations but in its area coverage, social composition and fundamental concerns.

The dominance of the Congress Party was based on absorbing all powerful elements in society and providing them a share in the structure of power it built. It was an open party capable of absorbing newer elements as they came into the political process, and because it was all-inclusive it did not become an instrument of any particular group. The weakness of the opposition gave it a near monopoly of power in the country for over two decades

although it received the support of only a minority of the electorate voting in the general elections.

This favourable situation came to an end in 1967 when the Congress Party suffered reverses in several States and its majority in the Lok Sabha was substantially reduced. As its dominance was undermined its capacity to enforce internal discipline diminished and the party suffered from large scale defections. These developments have highlighted the problems of political stability—of building viable majorities in the legislatures and providing coherent governments in the States.

The incoherence and instability that has characterised politics in a number of States since the fourth general election has not yet made its appearance at the Centre, but it is obvious that the likely danger of instability at the Centre has already become a matter of much concern to national leaders. In his presidential address to the Congress session at Faridabad, Nijalingappa expressed the fear that 'should the Congress Party fail to win absolute majority at the Centre, particularly when there

I am indebted to my colleague Miss S. Ghosh who processed much of the electoral data presented in this article.

is no other party in the field to step in and take its place, it would necessarily lead to political adjustments which may usher in a period of instability.

The Congress Party has never lacked the spirit of self-criticism, especially in a period of declining fortunes, and the Congress President and some of its leading members have provided the most recent examples of it. The Congress President observed that 'after independence when the Congress assumed office in most of the States and in the Centre, a class of people without faith in its traditions and programmes have got into the Congress... Another difficulty with the organisation is that it still continues to be a kind of national forum where people with different outlooks and ideologies find a place. The result is that even though good and attractive programmes have (been) adopted, they have not always been faithfully implemented.'

In the opinion of C. Subramaniam this has led to a 'breakdown of confidence among wide sections of the people... They no longer believe any programmatic statement of the Congress, claiming that it stands for social justice, a welfare State and an egalitarian order... restoration of the image of the Congress as a party pledged to democratic socialism demands not only the formulation of a correct programme but also that decisive and concrete steps should be taken to put this programme into practice...' He warned, 'Unless there is an early adoption of such a programme and its implementation so that results become apparent within a period of 18 months from now, there can be no hope of Congress making any headway in the 1972 elections.' Although at the Congress session at Faridabad this warning was rejected as being unduly pessimistic, we can take it that the partymen have become aware of the danger the party faces in 1972.

To students of Indian politics, the decline of a particular party would not be a matter of such concern but for the fact that the stability and viability of the Indian political system is, on present reckoning, tied up with the fate of the Congress Party, especially at the Centre. It is therefore necessary to estimate the true proportions of the challenge which will confront the Congress in the fifth general election.

A common reproach directed against the Congress Party is that it has secured legislative majorities on a minority of electoral support. The interesting thing of course is not that the Congress Party never secured throughout the country a majority of the valid votes polled but that it has been steadily losing ground to the opposition parties and independents and has now arrived at a stage where in many States

the electoral system has begun to deny it legislative seats in proportion to its share of the popular vote. This share itself has been falling since 1957. The following table shows the proportion of votes secured by the party in the four general elections and in the mid-term elections held since the last general election

TABLE 1

Per cent of valid votes polled by the Congress in the General Election (Lok Sabha)\* and the Mid-Term Polls, 1969.

State	1952	1957	1962	1967	1969†
Andhra Pradesh	31.7	51.5	48.0	46.8	
Assam	53.2	51.2	45.2	45.8	
Bihar	45.8	44.5	43.9	34.8	30.3
Gujarat	46.4	54.4	52.6	46.9	
Haryana †	40.6	51.3	41.3	44.1	43.9
Jammu & Kashmir	—	—	—	50.5	
Kerala	29.9	34.8	34.3	36.1	
Madhya Pradesh	49.0	52.1	39.6	40.8	
Maharashtra	52.6	46.4	52.9	48.5	
Mysore	54.9	55.5	52.7	49.0	
Orissa	42.5	40.0	55.5	33.3	
Punjab	40.6	51.3	41.3	37.3	39.3
Rajasthan	41.8	53.6	37.6	39.9	
Tamil Nadu	42.5	46.5	45.3	33.3	
Uttar Pradesh	53.0	46.3	38.2	33.0	33.7
West Bengal	42.1	48.2	46.8	39.7	41.3
INDIA	45.0	47.8	44.7	40.7	

It is obvious from Table 1 that the Congress Party has been losing the support of the electorate at an increasing rate in the country as a whole and at a precipitous pace in some States. The electoral support of the party has become increasingly unstable and survey data now show that a very large percentage of Congress voters in one election do not vote for the party in the following election. This loss is largely compensated by some new voters among whom the Congress Party appears to enjoy a rather surprising degree of support and some of the former voters for the non-Congress parties. The

\*The figures for 1952 and 1957, adjusted to the reorganised States, are those given in M. Weiner, *Party Building in a New Nation*, Chicago, 1968, p. 55; and those for 1962 and 1967 are as given in the Election Commission's *Report on the Third General Election, 1962*, and *Report on the Fourth General Election 1967*.

†The voting percentage figures for Haryana for 1952, 1957 and 1962 are the same as those for Punjab prior to the bifurcation of the State.

‡The figures are those for the mid-term elections held in Haryana in 1968 and in Bihar, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in 1969.

TABLE 2

Competitive Position of the Congress Seats Won, 1967 (Figures refer to numbers of constituencies)													
Congress Share of Votes	Number of Candidates												Total
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
16 — 19.9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1	..	2
20 — 24.9	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
25 — 29.9	..	..	..	2	2	1	..	2	..	..	2	1	10
30 — 34.9	..	..	1	5	6	4	7	1	1	..	1	..	26
35 — 39.9	..	2	5	14	9	6	5	..	..	..	..	..	41
40 — 44.9	..	6	19	14	6	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	50
45 — 49.9	..	18	19	7	7	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	54
50 — 54.9	13	9	17	8	4	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	53
55 — 59.9	6	6	8	1	..	..	2	..	..	..	1	..	24
60 Plus	5	6	2	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	18
Total:	24	47	71	55	36	16	19	3	2	..	5	1	279

pertinent fact, however, is that the stable support base of the party has shrunk over the years and there is no sign of a recovery of the lost ground.

Of immediate relevance for our purpose here are the likely consequences of this trend at the Centre. Over the years the dominant position of the Congress has been eroded. Its strength in the Lok Sabha has declined from 361 in 1962 to 283 in 1967, a loss of over a fifth. Since it seems most unlikely that the party will recover these losses, the critical question for 1972 is whether it will be able to retain the constituencies it now holds or whether it can adequately compensate its likely losses by comparable gains. A closer look at the statistics reveals the dimensions of the problem.

In 1967 the Congress Party won 279 contested seats and 4 unopposed. The table above shows the extent of support it received in the constituencies it won and the competitive situation in them at the time:

There are four points to be made about the above table.

1. The Congress Party secured only 95 of its 279 seats by 50 per cent or more of the valid votes polled.

2. While it secured a little over 40 per cent of the valid votes polled in the country as a

whole, 80 of its seats were won with less than 40 per cent of the vote.

3. While 40 per cent of the Lok Sabha seats were carried by their winners by 50 per cent or more of the valid votes polled, this was the case with only 34 per cent of the seats won by the Congress.

4. While the average number of contestants per constituency was 4.6, the Congress Party secured 137 of its seats in constituencies with 5 or more candidates.

From present trends it appears that the Congress Party can look upon only about 33 seats as safe and likely to be retained by it in 1972. All the seats it holds by 40 per cent or less of the votes seem to be open to opposition attack, and also all those it holds in constituencies with five or more candidates.

The situation of the Congress Party can be better appreciated by a similar scrutiny of the overall position of the opposition, which is shown in Table 3.

On an analysis similar to that made above for the Congress, we find that (1) 109 (over 46%) of the opposition seats are held by 50 per cent or more of the valid votes polled; (2) only 43 seats are held by less than 40 per cent of the valid votes polled; (3) 159 seats are held in constituencies with between two and four



TABLE 3

Competitive Position of the Opposition — Seats Won, 1967 (Figures refer to numbers of constituencies)														
Share of Votes Obtained by the Winner (Opposition)	Number of Candidates													
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
16 — 19.9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
20 — 24.9	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2
25 — 29.9	..	..	..	1	1	1	4	2	..	..	..	..	1	10
30 — 34.9	..	..	..	4	4	..	1	..	1	..	1	..	..	11
35 — 39.9	..	2	6	4	2	3	2	1	1	..	..	..	..	20
40 — 44.9	..	2	12	5	1	..	2	2	1	..	..	..	..	25
45 — 49.9	..	20	17	10	4	2	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	57
50 — 54.9	13	20	14	..	4	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	52
55 — 59.9	9	14	3	1	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	30
60 Plus	15	10	2	..	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	29
Total:	37	68	54	25	18	10	11	6	4	1	1	..	1	236

candidates and only 77 in constituencies with five or more candidates. It is obvious that the opposition enjoys a better margin of security in the constituencies it holds than does the Congress.

If we were to consider next the possibilities open to the Congress to augment its strength

we should take a look at the constituencies in which its candidates were defeated. Table 4 shows the distribution of defeated candidates over the various States and Union Territories and their share of the valid votes polled.

There are seventy constituencies in which the party polled 40 per cent or more of the

TABLE 4

Percentage of Votes Polled by Defeated Congress Candidates										
State	Up to 10	10 — 14.9	15 — 19.9	20 — 24.9	25 — 29.9	30 — 34.9	35 — 39.9	40 — 44.9	45 — 49.9	Total
Andhra Pradesh	..	..	..	..	1	1	2	1	1	6
Assam	..	..	..	..	..	3	1	..	..	4
Bihar	..	..	1	5	5	4	1	2	1	19
Gujarat	..	..	..	..	..	1	2	8	2	13
Haryana	..	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	2
Jammu & Kashmir	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1
Kerala	..	..	..	1	3	4	6	2	2	18
Madhya Pradesh	1	2	1	1	..	3	2	1	2	13
Maharashtra	..	..	..	..	..	2	1	4	1	8
Mysore	..	..	..	..	..	1	1	4	3	9
Orissa	..	..	..	2	4	7	1	..	..	14
Punjab	..	..	..	1	2	..	..	..	1	4
Rajasthan	..	..	..	..	2	4	1	3	2	12
Tamil Nadu	..	..	..	..	..	1	15	9	11	36
Uttar Pradesh	..	2	5	5	8	10	8	..	..	38
West Bengal	..	..	..	..	1	7	10	6	2	26
Union Territories	..	1	..	2	..	1	4	1	1	10
INDIA	1	5	7	18	26	49	57	41	29	233

votes. Obviously these would be the constituencies which it could try to win. As against this there are 41 constituencies held by the Congress in which one or the other opposition party, or an independent candidate, secured 40 per cent or more of the votes polled which would be subject to opposition pressure. The Statewise distribution of the Congress Party's likely gains and likely losses, on the assumption that it could win all the constituencies in which it polled 40 per cent or more of the votes, and lose those which it now holds but in which one of the opposition candidates polled 40 per cent or more of the votes, is given in Table 5.

There is one more way we could estimate the likely gains and losses of the Congress Party. This is by looking at the distribution of Assembly seats under the Parliamentary seats held by it. Apart from cases of deliberate split voting, the capacity to hold Assembly seats shows the extent of a party's strength in a Parliamentary constituency. In

1967 the Congress Party won a majority of Assembly seats in 209 and a minority in 74 of the 283 Parliamentary constituencies it held. Table 6 gives their distribution by States.

This suggests that 74 of the Congress seats will be vulnerable in the next Parliamentary election. The mid-term election results suggest that their number will be larger, not less.

The results of this exercise indicate that on balance the Congress Party could gain up to 113 seats and lose up to 121 seats, and should it succeed in retaining all the other 162 seats it now holds, it could command a precarious majority in the Lok Sabha in 1972. But this would require a stupendous effort from the party, whose magnitude will be clear from the following.

It has been shown that the Congress Party holds 184 seats by less than 50 per cent of the valid votes polled, and 80 of these by less than 40 per cent. The opposition on the

TABLE 5

The Congress Party's Likely Gains and Losses in 1972						
State	Number of seats held	Number of Constituencies in which 40% or more votes polled by the party	Of these seats won	Those held by less than 40%	Seats which the Party could try to win in 1972	Seats which the Party could lose
Andhra Pradesh	35	32	30	4	2	4
Assam	10	8	8	1	..	..
Bihar	34	13	10	24	3	..
Gujarat	11	20	10	1	10	4
Haryana	7	5	5	2	..	2
Jammu & Kashmir	5	3	3	..	..	1
Kerala	1	5	1	..	4	1
Madhya Pradesh	24	26	23	1	3	3
Maharashtra	37	39	34	3	5	11
Mysore	18	24	17	1	7	3
Orissa	6	3	3	3	..	1
Punjab	9	4	3	6	1	..
Rajasthan	10	13	8	2	5	3
Tamil Nadu	3	23	3	..	20	1
Uttar Pradesh	47	21	21	26	..	2
West Bengal	14	19	11	3	8	2
Union Territories	12	11	9	3	2	3
INDIA	283*	269	199	80	70	41

\*4 Unopposed

TABLE 6

Distribution of Parliamentary Seats Held by the Congress with a Minority and a Majority of Assembly Seats		
State	Number of Constituencies in which the party won a minority of the Assembly seats	Number of Constituencies in which the party won a majority of the Assembly seats
Andhra Pradesh	14	21
Assam	2	8
Bihar	18	16
Gujarat	..	11
Haryana	1	6
Jammu & Kashmir	..	3
Kerala	1	..
Madhya Pradesh	..	24
Maharashtra	..	37
Mysore	1	17
Orissa	2	4
Punjab	2	7
Rajasthan	..	10
Tamil Nadu	2	1
Uttar Pradesh	16	31
West Bengal	5	9
Union Territories	8	4
INDIA	74	209

other hand holds 127 seats by less than 50 per cent of the votes, and of these only 43 by less than 40 per cent. If we suppose that only seats held with less than 40 per cent of the votes change hands, the seats likely to become available to the Congress would not be 113, but only 43. Should it lose 80 seats and gain 43, the Congress would be reduced to a minority in the Lok Sabha.

If the Congress continues to lose electoral support at the rate at which it has been doing (3.1 per cent in 1962 over 1957, and 4 per cent in 1967 over 1962), the chances are that it would lose over five per cent of its present support in 1972. Such a decline would make the seats now held by 50 to 54.9 per cent of the votes also vulnerable, leaving it only with 42 safe seats of which 9 fall in constituencies with 5 or more candidates. The Congress may thus be defending as many as 246 of its currently held constituencies.

The fourth general election and the subsequent mid-term elections have made it clear that the opposition will not allow the Congress to benefit from multiple contests. In any event,

it is now established that the number of contestants has only a marginal bearing on the final outcome of the electoral contest. In 1967, of the 515 Lok Sabha constituencies 450 were effectively two or three candidate constituencies, though 149 of them had more than 3 candidates. In these 450 constituencies, 80 per cent or more of the votes were secured by the first two or three candidates, making the rest of the contestants electorally insignificant.

In considering the areas of gains and losses for the Congress Party, the regional distribution of constituencies likely to shift from the Congress to the opposition or from the opposition to the Congress is critical. The majority of the constituencies which it could try to win fall in States where the opposition forces are well entrenched, namely Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and even Orissa and Gujarat. Of the seventy constituencies which we have identified as likely to be available to the Congress, twenty are in Tamil Nadu, ten in Gujarat, eight in Bengal, seven in Mysore, five each in Maharashtra and Rajasthan and the rest spread over Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab—areas

which have witnessed a continuous weakening of the party since 1952.

The situation disclosed in 1967 has not been subsequently altered in favour of the Congress Party; in terms of seats it has become a good deal worse in West Bengal. But there is some evidence of a capacity to enlarge its support base. In three of the four States in which mid-term polls were held earlier this year, the Congress Party has improved its vote. It has gained support in more constituencies than it has lost in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. In Bihar its losses outnumber its gains. In Uttar Pradesh the party has made substantial gains (more than 10 per cent) in 100 constituencies, and up to 10 per cent in 137 others; in Bengal it gained votes in 150 constituencies against losses in 130; in Punjab it gained in 54 and lost in 47 constituencies. In Bihar it lost in 187 and gained in 139 constituencies. But it is obvious that such gains in votes polled as the party made were not enough, except in U.P., to enable it to retrieve its electoral fortunes. The West Bengal results suggest that the party tends to receive somewhat more support in a polarised situation, but it is never enough to determine the final outcome of the electoral contest in its favour.

The moral of the above analysis is clear. The Congress Party in order to retain its majority in the Lok Sabha must seek to become a party of the majority of the electorate in at least those constituencies in which it now has a substantial (between 40 and 49.9 per cent) support base; it must retrieve its position in seven States, with half the Lok Sabha strength, where it now holds only about 35 per cent of the seats, and preserve much of its present strength elsewhere. Widely distributed support throughout the country will not avail it against combined opposition in the election to Parliament, as it has not assisted it in elections to the State Assemblies. The party should not expect to benefit from the amorphous character of the opposition as it did in the past, for though at the national level the opposition remains amorphous, in several States a two-party, or one party and a united front, system has already emerged, at least for electoral purposes.

The crisis of the Congress Party could, in the absence of an alternative, become a crisis of the Indian political system. There is no prospect of an alternative emerging at the Centre, especially now that experience has discredited anti-Congressism and non-Congress parties are in no better health than the Congress.

The problem before the Congress has appeared to many both within it and outside as one of ideological image. C. Subramaniam has written of the need to restore the image of the

Congress Party as a party pledged to democratic socialism; and the Congress President, irritated by factional attacks, has spoken about the need for polarisation of opinion within the party. None of this will help. The strength of the Congress Party in the past lay in its being a Centre party enjoying considerable support at both the Right and the Left ends of the spectrum. A continental polity cannot be managed except from a centre position which can accommodate dissent both on the Left and on the Right within a broad-based national consensus.

The consensus built by Jawaharlal Nehru still appears to be the only one that can serve the Congress Party and the country well. The national development of the past twenty years has given rise to interest groups opposed to that consensus. They command substantial political and economic resources and have utilized them for defeating the Congress in several States. Within the Congress they constitute an influential, possibly powerful, element. But it would serve the country poorly if the Congress were to opt for an accommodation with them on their terms. It must endeavour to remain a party of the nation with a positive commitment to social justice.

Organisationally, there is vast scope for improvement. The structure of the Congress, like that of Hindu society, has been cellular, with no real integration at any level, with the result that most of its following is either personal or factional; it is not committed to the party as such. In the past this structure was well managed by the very powerful Congress high command. Since the death of Nehru the authority of the high command has been undermined and local factions in their interminable struggles for control over the party have driven out the defeated factions. These former Congressmen have swelled the ranks of the opposition and a large part of the electoral losses of the Congress are owed to them. This process cannot go on much longer without disrupting the Congress Party.

Those who believe that a realignment of political forces on a neater ideological pattern will further the interests of the country may view the disruption of the Congress Party with a degree of optimism, but those who do not see political life as a battle-ground for ideologies and view nation-building in a continental society as a difficult task requiring accommodation and patience must hope that the Congress Party will be preserved and strengthened so that it can assure political stability and continuity of central authority under a democratic system.

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GOPAL KRISHNA

# Areas of recovery

SATISH K. ARORA

THE Congress' successful conversion from movement to political party, in a milieu of minimal political coercion, lends a degree of uniqueness to its achievement and character. Several recent analyses of the party have celebrated its capacity to retain power at the polls and its ability to hold the country together in however precarious a unity. It is complemented for having extended its recruitment net to ever-widening circles of society. Its factionalism is sometimes bemoaned by those who lay stress on the ideal of consensus; its cleavages are considered to be detrimental to the future of the party. But many scholars, especially the American heirs to the Madisonian tradition, have celebrated such divisions, interpreting them as evidence of the party's capacity to incorporate within itself diverse elements and thereby providing a healthy competition of ideas and interests.

This mode of analysis is an approximately reasonable and accurate description of the Congress Party's first twenty years of power. But for predictive purposes such generalizations are of limited usefulness. It is a generally recognized proposition that the *raison d'être* of any political party, as a party, is to win power for itself at the polls. Congress

losses in the 1967 General Elections, I would suggest, are merely a forewarning of the more serious losses they are likely to suffer in the future. The reasons for such a withdrawal of confidence can only peripherally be found in the usually enumerated faults inherent in Congress, such as corruption, factionalism and unstable membership. More basic reasons may lie in the Congress' inability to recognize fully—and adjust to—the fact that coinciding with changes in the nation's socio-economic structure are changes, on a worldwide scale, in mass political behaviour.

It is also important to recognize that a governing party, especially in a parliamentary system, is responsible for the performance of two major functions: the maintenance of national stability and, especially if it lays claim to being a party of the Left, the legislating and executing of certain basic services for the national population. In this respect also, however, there is evidence of deep shortcomings on the part of the Congress. The stability which the Congress, as ruling party, has been able to maintain thus far is precarious and persistently threatened from many directions. These threats are too often passed off as merely law and order problems

There seems to be a deep reluctance to admit that they are symptoms of a far deeper malaise which is due, in large measure, to deficiencies in the policies pursued by the Congress government. The increasing instability and disorder in the nation is in no small measure due to the party's inability—or unwillingness—to perceive the nature of this malaise; and this shortcoming may, unless it is corrected, lead to serious consequences for the Congress' survival in the political spectrum, and perhaps also for the nation as a whole.

**T**he nation's integrity is threatened from without; within our borders dissatisfaction and alienation stalk the land. In their most extreme form, they are claims for secession, such as in border tribal areas where a humiliating distinction is made between 'you Indians' and 'us'. More ubiquitous are the threats which take the form of disruption caused by separatist movements demanding changes in boundaries or the creation of new States out of existing ones. Protests, strikes and, increasingly, riots have created an erratic tenor of existence. Most of the incidents arising out of such a milieu are regarded by Congress rulers as problems of law and order, requiring an unthinking suppression—or appeasement—without any real investigation of possible underlying causes. Administrators increasingly consider police firing a normal procedure, the blame is placed on goondas, or outlaw leadership, or the impetuosity of spoiled youth.

Not infrequently such disturbances are interpreted as having been politically instigated, the accused being either dissident elements within the party or else 'irresponsible' opposition parties. This appears to have been the case with the Congress Government's treatment of the Telengana issue: while railroads, buses and even human beings were burnt, the party fiddled with political manoeuvres. It is interesting, however, that despite increased utilization

of the central police reserves and the military, disturbances continue to plague increasingly wider areas of the nation; the duration of university terms fluctuate erratically; and curfews, bundhs and sabotage of national utilities and communications continue unabated.

There are of course many reasons for these conditions, and some are peculiar to the particular incidents involved. But there is little doubt that the Congress Party, both in its role as a party and its role as the government, has failed, on the one hand, systematically and scientifically to diagnose the problems confronting the nation; and on the other hand, to provide the minimal basic services and conditions which could assuage the more general and too often justified grievances felt by large sections of our population.

There is reason to be convinced about the inability of the Congress Party to establish adequate information gathering and processing facilities at least at the Central and State levels. The rudimentary research bureau proposed by the S. K. Patil Committee on Congress Reorganization is in the right direction; but one has profound doubts whether India's premier political organization can sufficiently comprehend the cruciality of ensuring the accurate and continuing flow of information and of subjecting it to rigorous analysis. The report of C. Subramaniam forecasts an alarming decline in Congress power. Taken together with the Patil report, we have a sufficiently urgent identification of areas of concern. However, there is serious doubt whether the analytical functions which should follow up these reports will be forthcoming.

**I**t is this intellectual sluggishness which is disappointing. Organizational research requires not merely scrutiny of the past and present, but the charting of probable configurations of the future. It is, after all, the ability deci-

sively to affect trends that ensures a measure of control over unfolding events. But in treating even critical events, the Congress' approach seems too often like that of the French bureaucrats who Jean-Jacques Servan-Scheiber suggests give 'unjustified priority of flair over systematic thought.'

It seems rather difficult to believe that Congress, especially in view of its espousal of leftist ideology, lacks perception enough to realize what even a non-ideological investigation could reveal: namely, that insufficient attention has thus far been given to creating the structural conditions which would facilitate minimal socio-economic opportunities for the majority of the population. It would appear that this shortcoming is an important contextual reason underlying a large proportion of the separatist demands and disorder that now seem to be routine in large sections of the country. A feeling of relative deprivation haunts those who rally to movements which, in recognition of this, advocate special treatment for all who share a particular common language or historical memory, symbols around which emotions of identity can be aroused. But if one looks deeper, the more glaring reasons for these disruptions appear to lie in the agonizing disparities in real income, as well as in economic and social opportunities.

**N**ot only does the Congress appear to lack the information-gathering facilities necessary to analyze these factors, but it also apparently gives little evidence of recognizing the importance of continuing intellectual appraisal. Its entire policy-cum-patronage system appears to belie the existence of such conditions. Consider, for example, the fact that the majority of our nation's population is not provided an adequate drinking water supply. Or, consider that a packaged family planning programme has been subscribed to without any meaningful debate on whether such a

heavy national investment is required for this one programme, or whether there might not be other alternative strategies to effect economic well being and which might be given even more weightage in the allocation of resources.

The underprivileged have often been manipulated into participating in such programmes; inspired by political statements and their own views on the subject, administrators as well as legislators have been known to cajole the helpless by threatening an arbitrary denial of access to basic facilities unless their subjects bend bodies and spirit to fulfill targets. At the same time, there has been no similar large-scale effort to bring to our rural people minimal, dependable health facilities. In fact our cities also lack such minimal services. And where such facilities do exist and purport to be free, corruption demands that even the poorest pay, thus denying to those who need them most the confidence in government which Congress so dearly aspires to engender.

Another area of potential discontent can be identified in the peculiarly inept and lopsided educational structure. Education is possibly the key factor in facilitating social and economic mobility, and yet it is obvious that only a small proportion of our total population is provided the opportunity to avail itself of the appropriate educational facilities. Rather than good education being made readily accessible to all, so that it could be utilized as a leverage for economic advancement, it is left to the economically advanced to monopolize the few institutions that still retain the pretence of providing quality education. Even the university system seems geared largely to providing token satisfaction. Not merely is the type of education and teaching inadequate, but present institutional arrangements are so structured that the chances of jobs even for those in technical areas like engineering are often

poor. Is it any wonder, then, that students, perhaps more aware than even their teachers of the poor quality of their education, and faced with economic insecurity turn to what may appear to be a more meaningful participation in political extremism?

Agricultural policies are similarly based explicitly on providing inputs and ancillary technical services for those who are already better off. The government seems to have long ago accepted a position enunciated in the official community development handbook that its operatives should work through the established leadership in our villages. This may be an effective technique for bringing about change. But that there may be long-run political consequences of this openly biased technique, especially under conditions prevailing in large parts of India, seems scarcely to have been taken into consideration. It is a generally acceptable fact that the already rich farmers are the ones who are the primary beneficiaries of most rural agricultural programmes. In terms of geographic areas, it has also been the richest sections which have been purposely selected for 'package' treatment. The Congress Party has been able to create alliances in depth with the rich peasantry through such programmes, inherently biased in favour of those who have the necessary land and risk-taking capacities.

For the short-run, these may indeed be wise policies, both for the nation and the party. Presumably, although there is also evidence to the contrary, production is more likely to rise if resources are invested in those who are already well endowed. It is also apparent that a squirearchy, closely welded to the Congress has been assiduously cultivated in our countryside, thereby giving to the Congress reasonable assurance of short-term smooth delivery of rural votes. But there are reasons to suspect that the perception of relative deprivation, once set in

motion, will serve to negate the gains made by Congress in its alliance with such a squirearchy. It is not unreasonable to expect that those peasants who remain outside the orbit of egalitarian programmes will be potentially available for mobilization on a counter-ideological basis. It would appear that recent violent clashes between landlords and agricultural labour in Tanjore, an area which has been especially 'progressive' and which has been the recipient of large governmental inputs give some indication of what happens when the concept of relative deprivation becomes a reality in the minds of men. With the expectation that the so-called 'green revolution' will affect ever widening areas of the country, it might be predicted with a reasonable degree of confidence that those in the lower social strata of such areas will feel increasingly discontented unless adequate steps are taken, to ensure that they also get a proportionate share of the growing benefits.

The Congress is being blamed for the increasing inequality in no ambiguous terms, as has emerged quite clearly in a recent survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion. Respondents in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal were asked whether the Congress Party of the State 'usually upholds the interests of the rich,' or 'usually upholds the interests of the poor.' In three of the four States, the number of persons who felt it was a party for the rich was two to three times greater than the number who felt it was for the poor. It is instructive to note that only in the Punjab, where, among other indicators, wages of agricultural labourers have almost doubled in the last three years, this pattern was not apparent. There those who felt it was the party for the rich equalled the number of those who felt it was for the poor. If we assume that the higher the education the greater the capacity to recognize political realities, it is significant that in the higher

education categories, as compared with those with lower education, a greater number felt that Congress was the party which upheld the rich. Again, Punjab aside, even those in the highest income categories were more of the opinion that Congress is for the rich rather than for the poor.

Clearly, the evolving public image of the Congress—the party's socialist rhetoric notwithstanding—is that of an entrenched political oligarchy aligned against the poorer strata of our country. It is when pictures such as these are spontaneously painted that a political party needs to scrutinise itself. Dramatic acts of nationalization may be an integral chapter in the handbooks on socialism, but it is debatable whether such formulae are the appropriate policy measures to alter existing inequalities, or whether independent analysis of Indian conditions could suggest different strategy and tactics to alleviate our societal malaise. One has serious doubts if the nationalized funds of the banks will automatically be utilized for the poorer segments of our peasantry. Obviously past performance of the government leads one to suspect that those who have shall get more even as the poorest among us become still further invisible to myopic policy makers.

Indeed, it appears that government funds have a remarkable way of being siphoned off by the affluent few. Evidence to this effect has been provided by the Monopolies Inquiry Commission and can now be supplemented by the report of the Industrial Licensing Policy Inquiry Committee, presented to the Parliament less than a week after the ordinance to nationalize banks. According to this report, of the nationalized Life Insurance Corporation's term loans, as high as seventy per cent went to large-scale industry. In the case of loans of another government-run institution, the State Bank, eighty-two per cent was directed to this sector. The LIC

and State Bank obviously prefer 'safe' (that is rich) parties as do the cooperative and other governmental bodies in the agricultural sector. Big business and big government coalesce in our society—in spite of, and perhaps because of, nationalization which is uninformed of social purpose and manned by a bureaucracy unconcerned and incapable of assimilating the norms of social justice. It would appear that the need for engendering new sources of revenue should be regarded as of far less crucial importance than the mode which is selected for distributing them.

If, however, Congress, in its role as governing party, is the party for the well-to-do, it is perhaps even more apparent that it is by the well-to-do as well. If there were no contingency factors to consider, this would be a reasonable fact to expect and accept. Involvement in the politics of most countries requires a degree of economic freedom (although obviously the gains to one's economic position may also enter into one's calculation of whether or not to join a party). Even elites of parties in communist countries are often largely composed of those from economically well-to-do backgrounds.

As attested to by several well documented case studies (such as are found in Paul Brass' *Factional Politics in an Indian State*; *The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh* and Myron Weiner's *Party Building in a New Nation*; *The Indian National Congress*), Congress' support and vote-generating power at village, block and district levels rests almost invariably upon rich leaders of dominant, high castes. Such techniques have been applauded as keys to Congress' achievement of success in the electoral arena. But the real question still remains: given the socio-economic structure of India, and the persistent neglect of large portions of the population both through governmental policy and the Congress' recruitment practice, how long can Congress expect to maintain hegemony through

these existing manipulative arrangements?

With respect to this question, let us visualize a reasonably homogeneous population where cleavages do not run deep; where most of the population belongs to several cross-cutting groups; and where those who live at subsistence level are comparatively few in number. Then, one can hypothesize, it is not particularly relevant to a party if its stands on issues are usually ambiguous; if it does not give special treatment to any single segment of the social structure, regardless of its ideology; and if its leadership springs from a particular social segment. Indeed, such a party may tend to prosper under such conditions, and the population at large may also be reasonably satisfied with such arrangements.

But, visualize a more highly structured society, where cleavages tend to cut off one segment from another; where the majority may not have any significant cross-cutting loyalties which they share with the rest of the population; and where are only limited chances for social and economic mobility. In such a case, and we would suggest that India fits this case, political parties can ignore the concept of class only at the risk of their own viability. A Leftist party in a relatively fluid society undoubtedly must temper its class-based appeals if it wishes to achieve electoral success. But where lower class interests are conspicuously definable and pressing, where this class shares almost no overlapping identifications with other groups in the society and where this class is in a numerical majority within a democratic political system, a party in the long run cannot ignore the latent class basis of politics. It is for this reason that analyses which exclusively concentrate on the question of cleavages within Congress tend to deflect attention from what may be the more highly significant problem in so far as the party is concerned, and that is the prob-



item of cleavages within the socio-economic structure.

So long as the local power elite persists in holding in tow those who are economically dependent upon them, Congress strategy—at least in so far as winning votes is concerned—may continue to be successful. But, as those outside the patronage orbit gain insight into their exclusion from the largesse distributed by government, they may become potential challengers to Congress power. In many developed countries of the world, such as the United States, Canada and Great Britain, there have been societal segments which have been similarly long cut off from the rest of the population, and whose loyalties and group memberships and identities have not cross cut with the remainder of the society. Political parties in these countries have only recently come to realize that such groups can seriously affect the more usual patterns of party politics if their particular demands are too long ignored. But a significant difference between the problem in these countries and that which faces the Congress in India is that, for the former, threats have come from relatively underprivileged minorities; for India, a potential majority suffers relative deprivation and little is being done significantly to alleviate its condition.

To discard the possibility that, given proper leadership, this majority can seriously threaten not merely the viability of Congress, but also the nation is to ignore wilfully significant facts of contemporary political life. Classical democratic theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emphasized that a political system needed to fulfil two basic functions: to provide the conditions under which its citizens could best achieve their own self-defined ends; and to provide an outlet for participation in political life. They considered participation to be necessary not merely for counteracting the excesses of ruling elites, but also for developing the

personality of members of society by giving them a sense of engagement in the governing of their society. This theory developed at a time when there was disillusionment with currently ruling monarchies and aristocracies: when the middle classes at least felt that, contrary to the claims of the Burkiens, governments did not govern on behalf of the interests of all the people—the governed had to defend their own interests.

Contemporary twentieth century political thought, on the other hand, has largely refrained from emphasizing that participation is a political and psychological good. One reason for this has been that a majority of relatively homogeneous, well-fed populations have felt that their interests are not particularly threatened by the ruling elites. Moreover, their privatized pursuits have offered enough psychological satisfaction that only a small proportion have been attracted to participating actively in the political arena. Thus, in so far as the American population is concerned, studies such as Berelson's *Voting* suggest that what is probably ought to be: the health of democracy is dependent upon the fact that a goodly number of Americans are either completely passive or indifferent to politics. A corollary of this is that politics can profitably be left to parties and the ruling elites. When segments of society require that their interests be better represented at governmental levels, it is suggested that they can work successfully through secondary organizations which will lobby on their behalf.

Furthermore western scholars have been applying their theory to underdeveloped areas as well. Not merely have many such scholars de-emphasized the idea that political participation is a democratic good, but some, notably Ithiel de Sola Pool, have seriously warned against large-scale participation, interpreting it as a threat to the political order. Some scholars have also rather approvingly suggested that primary

groups such as castes and lineages have been effectively converting themselves into proto-secondary organizations which can serve the same political functions as pressure groups in western democracies. The implication of such a viewpoint is that Congress, with its current policy of patronizing and recruiting the leaders of jatis and lineages not only will be thereby assured of the support of the rank and file members of such groups, but will be following the best traditions of democracy and thereby contributing to its survival in India.

The political practice of the past decade, however, may be out-running political theory. This is becoming evident especially in the West, but, we suggest, the Indian political system can hardly be quarantined and cannot be immune from its effects. Throughout the western world, and even sporadically in Eastern Europe, groups within the population have felt the need of communicating directly with the governing elites, by-passing thereby the standard secondary organizations, which are often viewed by them as either too big to be psychologically acceptable and/or too closely in league with the establishment effectively to represent their interests. In this process where citizens, *en masse*, often dramatically move to demonstrate their demands, they also bypass the party structure. Although labour unions have long resorted to extra-constitutional, extra-party methods to achieve their ends, in the past decade their methods have spread to other groups within western society: long-neglected minority groups such as the Negroes; groups objecting to treatment by government welfare bureaus; groups objecting to their nation's foreign policy; and student groups all over the world.

One senses that for persons participating in such a-party activities, there is not merely the desire to achieve specific social ends; but especially in the case of those who are relatively better

off (rather than relatively deprived) such political participation can give challenge and meaning to their lives which neither private economic pursuit nor participation in monolithic and oligarchic interest groups can give. Thus a full circle appears to have been achieved with respect to the theory of political behaviour: political participation is again proving to be a personally meaningful experience, and especially for those in wealthy countries who are somewhat liberated economically and are seeking greater purpose in their lives.

**O**f what relevance is this to be future of the Congress Party in India? After all, there are but a tiny minority of our citizens who feel so satiated with economic gains that they require, as it were, participation in political life in order to enrich their own lives. It is at this point that we ought to recall that large-scale participation in mass demonstrations by the well-to-do is a more recent phenomenon than earlier examples of mass movements. In the latter, it was the working class or deprived colonial peoples whose demands the established political structure could not adequately accommodate, who tended to participate. When appropriate leadership was available (and this often came from the upper classes), such groups, out of a sense of relative deprivation, turned to the activism of mass movements. The disruptive effects of such movements have doubtless been in the minds of those political scientists who in the tradition of defenders of oligarchy, have turned to the support of government by elites, while advocating simultaneously a tier of secondary associations to shield these elites from direct contact with the possibly radicalising influence which might result from an intimate and continuing contact with the people.

In India today there are large segments of our society which feel relatively deprived. They harbour latent feelings of hostility towards or alienation from government because while providing

them with the hope of economic well-being and security, it has provided them with few means to satisfy aroused expectations. Such persons are likely to feel all the more strongly because while they have been obviously neglected, others have been consistently patronized—by the government, with a view to implementing its economic policies, and by the Congress Party, with a view to achieving electoral success. The futility associated with their pursuit of a livelihood also contributes to a sense of *ennui* which is in no small measure comparable to the *ennui* which the affluent segments of industrial societies—especially the younger generation—feel when they realize that their own economic pursuits, or the contemplation of their economic future, will be unacceptable in terms of the values they are internalising today. For the poor (excluding the very poorest, whose entire efforts are absorbed in meeting the minimal requirements of sustaining life itself), it is the uncertainty and hopeless discontent which makes them available for mobilization when a strong enough counter-elite seeks to rally them.

**T**his then presents perhaps the greatest potential challenge to the success of the Congress in the coming years. Thus far the nation—and Congress—have been the targets only of localized manifestations of political activism. In these cases the rhetoric of identity (in terms of language, history, geography, race or religion) has been the dominant mobilizing call; but, it may be hypothesized, that it is the common feeling of relative deprivation which actually unites the mobilized participants. As national economic indicators continue to rise, and those who benefit continue to be the few who have been traditionally well off, it may be predicted that even larger numbers will be ripe for mobilization by challengers to Congress power. Congress may have been identified as the party of 'consensus', but when such consensus is based

upon the power of the rich to coerce, as it were, the support of the poor, one cannot reasonably assume that it will perpetually be able to do so. The economically deprived of India not only possess examples of non-cooperation from their own history, but they live today in a world where mass protests are changing established patterns of political behaviour and thereby presenting serious challenges to established party structures everywhere.

**C**ongress today has at least the possibility of influencing the unfolding future. It can recognize the short-sightedness of relying exclusively on local elites, and make concerted attempts at recruiting and harnessing the energies of those at lower levels of the social structure. It can link up with the masses and imbibe of their latent radicalism to provide correctives to its own inherently oligarchic tendencies. Rapid induction of hitherto unmobilized strata invariably affects not only party composition but leadership structures as well. A broadened base may facilitate the formulation of policies that faithfully articulate popular demands. More, this may assist the party to escape from its dilemma of espousing humanist and Leftist slogans and pursuing anything but such policies.

At this point in time, there is still hope for the Congress; but after 1972 even this hope may vanish as counter-elites rally in unstable coalitions to defeat the Congress at the polls—in the States, as they have done before, and at the Centre, which is likely. That prospect can only be contemplated with ambivalence by those of us who have lived through the movement phase of Congress and find ourselves profoundly alienated by its policies while in power. Yet, it is instructive to remember that a whole generation will be coming of voting age in 1972: for them the Congress has been only another, albeit successful political party. They may not be ambivalent.

# Historical record

E.P.W da COSTA

TO forecast the Congress Party's fortunes in 1972 is today as academic as to discuss the future of space travel. The reason is simple. Events in July and early August clearly indicate that the Congress Party, which fought the elections in 1951-52, 1957, 1962 and 1967 as well as the mid-term elec-

tions in 1969, has ceased to exist as the same entity. It is not yet known what entity will bear the Congress name, but it is obvious that any analysis of the future based on past performance of the Congress Party, whether on popular votes or on seats has no place in the forecast of likely events in

TABLE I

**The Lok Sabha Congress Percentage of Congress 'Valid' Vote Related to Number of Contestants**

	Election Year						Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6 or more	
1957		54.27	47.40	42.48	39.71	40.83	47.78
1962		52.89	46.23	42.64	43.47	40.02	44.72
1967		46.84	42.33	43.58	39.52	34.44	40.10

the near future. The present article's purpose today is, therefore, merely to restate the historical pattern by which the Congress Party has obtained the power from an electorate between 1951-52 and 1967. Also the manner in which it was defeated in the mid-term elections of February, 1969.

There may, or may not, be any elements in common with the parameters which have been the vehicles of power over the last twenty years. There is however major historical interest in the analysis of the voting pattern and the (unrelated) distribution of seats over the last twenty years. This analysis is presented in terms of a proved model which the Indian Institute of Public Opinion first developed before the General Election in 1967. The model worked well as a forecasting instrument in 1967 and in three out of four States in the mid-term elections of 1969. It is possible it may have some relevance to the future.

Until November 1966, it was widely believed, in spite of evidence clearly available in the elections of 1951-52, 1957 and 1962, that every non-Congress candidate in an election split only the Opposition vote. It has been left to quite elementary researches conducted by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion to demonstrate both for State Assembly and Lok Sabha seats, that the Congress 'popular' vote splinters in a readily predictable manner, depending on the number of candidates that contest seats. This happens to be, for all the elections studied, a linear relation, declining some-

six candidates or more. In other words, in the passage from a straight fight to a multi-candidate contest, the Congress lost nearly 12.5 per cent of the total vote or about 30 per cent of its own. This is in part a measure of the Congress 'floating' vote, in part a reflection of the character of the Opposition parties' floating vote which cannot yet be precisely distributed because no one Opposition party puts up candidates in more than a fraction of the total seats. Nevertheless, here is a vital new fact: something between 30 to 35 per cent of the 1967 Congress was detachable by the entry of new contestants.

Conversely, as in the mid-term elections of February 1969, when the effective number of candidates was reduced by alliances as in the Punjab, the splinter factor operated in reverse and the Congress Party rose by the return of a portion of the vote which is progressively detached as the number of candidates increases. What this means in non-arithmetical terms is that there are degrees of loyalty to the Congress Party: there is a

what over time. For every new contestant above two in 1957, the Congress vote splintered over three per cent for the Lok Sabha in 1957; about 2.4 per cent in 1962 and about 2.1 per cent in 1967. Since, however, the ceiling with two candidates was dropping even more rapidly, the end result with six candidates and more has fallen steadily and particularly steeply in 1967 as Table I will indicate.

If we deal only with valid votes polled, as against all votes polled the Congress percentage dropped from the ceiling of 46.84 per cent with two candidates in 1967 to an all-time low of 34.44 per cent with

TABLE II

**The Operation of the Splinter Factor on Congress Popular Vote Percentage**  
1962 Assembly Elections

State/Contestants	2	3	4	5	6 or more*	Average
Andhra Pradesh	52.21	46.02	43.07	44.97	46.23	47.25
Assam	57.68	50.16	49.54	45.89	36.19	48.25
Bihar	50.49	43.59	42.10	41.48	37.78	41.35
Gujarat	55.45	47.75	52.16	53.66	42.54	50.84
Madhya Pradesh	41.00	38.80	42.00	37.10	35.70	38.54
Madras	47.67	48.53	45.80	45.33	39.68	46.14
Maharashtra	55.98	55.68	52.36	50.58	44.80	51.22
Mysore	50.85	51.76	53.06	46.78	34.82	50.22
Punjab	50.41	45.65	44.81	43.10	39.07	43.72
Rajasthan	48.50	44.81	39.92	38.76	36.25	39.98
Uttar Pradesh	45.20	47.50	45.00	41.50	31.30	36.30
West Bengal	51.44	47.63	46.21	45.71	43.82	47.29
Average	50.57	47.56	46.34	44.57	39.02	44.38

\*Average: 7.17

'hard' core which probably will never be splintered but it is relatively small since splintering (with 15 candidates in one U.P. election for example) proceeds deep into the Congress 'straight' vote. Whenever a serious alternative appears in the form of a good candidate, almost irrespective of party, an inroad of between two and four percentage points seems to be made. This can be illustrated in rather more detail in the special case of State Assemblies in the 1962 election as in Table II.

It is now necessary to deal with the far more uncertain factor invented by the Institute and proclaimed the Congress Multiplier. The Multiplier is a newcomer into India, or even world public opinion research having been developed as a new parameter for estimation of seats only in the later half of 1966. The theory then was that in the Indian electoral system it would always average over

movement of the Multiplier in cases where the number of contestants vary.

It has been shown, broadly, by covariance analysis that the distribution of marginal seats in favour of the Congress does not 'normally' obtain, and one can, therefore, in a first approximation assume this is not an important variable. The number of contestants, however, is a marked determinant, with the Multiplier rising steeply as the number of contestants increase beyond two. The Congress vote splinters reducing the Party's chances with every new contestant but in three elections 1952, 1957 and 1962 the Multiplier has risen more steeply giving the Congress a net advantage through the Multiplier on its popular vote. The figures for three elections in Table III will illustrate the point for the Lok Sabha.

The 'floating' vote is only a small part of the Congress Party's

Multiplier's new behaviour when there are two, three, or four candidates which has totally changed the picture. With five and more candidates, there is a recovery, but quite insufficient to wipe out the damage done earlier: indeed, the average with four contestants or less is lower than unity. This shows at once, in a dramatic way where the Achilles heel of the Congress lies.

In February 1967, the Congress won only 20 out of 60 straight fights in the Lok Sabha; this compares with 116 out of 157 in 1957 and 48 out of 67 in 1962. In three-cornered contests it won only 44 out of 114 or only 38.6 per cent: in 1957 it won 71.6 of such contests and in 1962, 70.5 per cent; in quadrangular contests in 1967 its figure was better at 59.7 per cent but still much lower than the figures of 80.2 per cent in 1957 and 83.1 per cent in 1962. The margins of difference were lower thereafter, but in no group except one (when there were more than six candidates), could the Congress do better than in 1962. In the average it lost nearly twenty per cent of the 1962 seats in the Lok Sabha, with a drop of less than five per cent in the 'valid' popular vote. This, and no other, is the central explanation of the results of the 1967 elections. It is not the electorate, but the new electoral alliances which swung the results decisively against the Congress.

The operation of this factor (electoral alliances) was much more dramatic in West Bengal in the mid-term elections. Here, much to the surprise of superficial observers, there was no major landslide in the Congress popular vote, meaning that there was no great swing of popular opinion away from the Congress towards the communists. Congress received 41.31 per cent of the popular vote as against 41.13 per cent in 1967. If one considers the Front Parties of 1967, namely the two branches of the Communist Party, the Forward Bloc, the Bangla Congress and the SSP, the popular vote in

TABLE III

Congress Lok Sabha Multipliers: 1957, 1962, 1967						
Number of Contestants						
1	2	3	4	5	6 or more	Average
1957	1.36	1.51	1.89	2.05	1.98	1.57
1962	1.35	1.52	1.95	1.88	1.49	1.65
1967	0.71	0.91	1.37	1.69	1.78	1.30

unity giving the Congress Party always a magnification of seats against its percentage of the popular vote. The behaviour of the Multiplier can only be deduced from the experience of previous elections. The theory in outline is fairly simple. Apart from the popular vote which occurs in its definition, movements of the Multiplier must be related to some other factors to give the large variations that have been exhibited between 1957 and 1967. Two of these factors have been particularly studied, firstly the distribution of marginal seats won by the 'Congress'; secondly, and in much greater detail the

trouble: for it existed in 1957 and 1962 when the Congress romped home in the Lok Sabha and held all States. The three rows of figures in Table I show at once that the trouble is not either the Splinter Factor or the 'overall' fall in the popular vote. Between 1957 and 1962, the latter dropped for the Lok Sabha about three percentage points: between 1962 and 1967 it dropped only a little over 4.5 percentage points. Obviously, this minor change could not have wrought the havoc that shook the Congress almost in 1967 throughout the land. It is the Congress

1969 came to just 41.98 per cent against 41.36 per cent in 1967.

Thus, the differential popular votes of the front proper and of the Congress have moved barely 1 per cent since 1967. With a popular vote of the great giants moving 1 per cent either way (apart from the Independents noted above) the Congress lost 72 seats and the United Front, outside Independents, gained nearly 95. In other words, a swing of seats of nearly a hundred per cent on the side of the United Front and 60 per cent against the Congress came about with a movement of just two per cent in the popular vote. This was the most dramatic effect in India seen of the operation of the dreaded Multiplier.

This might be described as one of the most astounding combinations of unity that India has ever or probably will ever see, and accounts for the Congress Party's rout in West Bengal. This is the invisible weapon of doom. For,

the Multiplier is a mathematical ratio connected with the frequency distribution of contests which can only be estimated on the basis of judgment of a contest, seemingly multiple but possibly a massive single confrontation. Now that successes in opposition alliances in Madras, Kerala, Punjab and, above all, West Bengal have proved their worth one must assume that the effective number of contestants in 1972 might well be at most three.

If this is so, we might visualise as in Table III, the range of decline of likely multipliers. In 1967, in three cornered contests the Multiplier at 0.91 was below unity and in straight fights as low as 0.71, nearly half of the corresponding figure for 1957 which was 1.36. If the multiplier disappeared (say it was unity) in 1972—and this seems highly probable—the Congress with even a popular vote of 40 per cent would hold just 200 seats. A Congress majority in 1972 is, therefore, extremely unlikely.

TABLE IV

The Operation of the Multiplicity of Candidates on the Congress Multiplier

1962 Assembly Elections

State/Contestants	2	3	4	5	6 or more*	Average
Andhra Pradesh	1.00	1.23	1.44	1.31	1.65	1.23
Assam	1.22	1.03	1.74	2.01	2.58	1.59
Bihar	1.05	0.99	1.40	1.54	1.68	1.41
Gujarat	1.22	1.33	1.60	1.86	1.76	1.44
Madhya Pradesh	0.43	0.71	1.41	1.30	1.82	1.27
Madras	1.00	1.30	1.59	1.99	1.42	1.46
Maharashtra	1.26	1.40	1.62	1.57	1.90	1.59
Mysore	1.02	1.31	1.60	1.63	1.85	1.31
Punjab	0.83	1.22	1.04	1.55	1.60	1.34
Rajasthan	0.88	1.06	0.98	1.49	1.51	1.24
Uttar Pradesh	1.48	1.12	1.15	1.60	1.82	1.60
West Bengal	1.08	1.05	1.61	1.49	1.40	1.31
Average	1.04	1.15	1.43	1.61	1.75	1.40

\* Average: 7.17

# Economic performance

P. N. DHAR

THE regeneration of the Indian economy was one of the major motivations of the freedom movement led by the Indian National Congress. In view of the diversity of the social composition of the Congress, the economic ideas that permeated its leadership were also diverse. At the ideological level there were two main sources of inspiration: Gandhi and Nehru; one an exponent of populist ideas, and the other of social democratic concepts. At a broad level of generality and at the edges, the friction between the two was not difficult to remove, even though the hard core in each case differed widely. Both were intensely concerned about the poverty of the people at large and were

anxious to improve their lot, but neither of the two had thought through their ideas in sufficient depth to be able to grapple with the problems of industrialising a backward country when the Congress Party was called upon in 1947 to lead the national government.

This was, of course, less true of Nehru than of Gandhi. But even Nehru had no clear realisation of the difficulties involved in promoting rapid growth alongside large-scale sharing of its benefits by the people. Indeed he had great faith in planning, but he did not anticipate adequately enough the political demands it was going to make. To be sure, Nehru was

broadly familiar with Soviet economic planning and had set up before independence under the aegis of the Congress a National Planning Committee which did publish a series of reports. These reports, although they brought together considerable data and national plan. It was, therefore, information, failed to produce a only after the Planning Commission was set up in 1950 that the Congress Party and now the government faced the problem of evolving a framework which would make possible significant economic development with a perceptible degree of social justice.

Under the leadership of Nehru the Indian economy began to be restructured in terms of a mixed economy. In a way, the concept of a mixed economy was the economic counterpart of Nehru's concept of non-alignment in foreign affairs. Just as the policy of non-alignment tried to steer clear of rival military blocs, a mixed economy attempted to steer clear of the extremes of capitalist and socialist ideologies. The mixed economy was seen as a third alternative which, while retaining the free markets of capitalism, extended the sphere of public ownership and control in vital and strategic sectors of the economy.

**T**he public sector was expected to be the *premium mobile* of growth as well as an engine of social justice. As a generator of resources it was to become an in-built mechanism for further growth and as a repository of public ownership it was a powerful anti-monopoly institution. Since the bulk of heavy industry and the capital goods sector were to be within its boundaries, the public sector was at once a promoter and a guarantor of socialism. The existence of a large private sector was, therefore, not held to be antithetical to the growth of socialism since Nehru, like Aneurin Bevan, believed that the victory of socialism does not have to be universal to be decisive.

Nehru, however, was conscious of the fact that the ultimate pur-

pose of the new economic system his government was trying to create was to solve the basic economic problems of the people. 'If we do not ultimately solve the basic problems of our country, the problems of food, clothing housing and so on,' said Nehru, 'it will not matter whether we call ourselves capitalists, socialists communists or anything else. If we fail to solve these problems we shall be swept away and somebody else will come in and try to solve them. So ultimately these major problems of the day are not going to be solved by argument or by war but by the method that succeeds in delivering the goods... That method need not necessarily be an extreme method belonging to either of these two rival ideologies. It may be something in between.'

**H**ave Congress policies which Nehru termed as 'something in between' solved the basic problems which were in his mind?

To begin at the beginning, what sort of dent have Congress economic policies made on mass poverty? It may be best to answer this question with the help of a few numbers. In 1962, a working group of the Planning Commission recommended a private consumption standard of Rs. 240 per capita per year as a bare minimum. Accepting this as a yardstick to measure poverty, Dr. B. S. Minhas of the Indian Statistical Institute has, on the basis of NSS data, come to the conclusion that the number of people below this normative poverty line, as defined above, has stayed 'pretty nearly constant around 240 millions between 1957-58 and 1967-68'. The proportion of population in this category has, no doubt, fallen from 58 per cent to 48 per cent but according to Dr. Minhas, this is largely a consequence of the 'increase in the overall per capita consumption from Rs. 254 in 1957-58 to Rs. 290 in 1967-68; the slight fall in the concentration index (Lorenz ratio), from 0.335 in 1957-58 to 0.311 in 1967-68 con-

tributed very little. The per capita private consumption during this period grew at a rate of 1.33 per cent per year; per capita net national product at 1.62 per cent and population at 2.28 per cent per year.'

This is indeed a poor performance for a party which has been verbally improving upon its objectives from time to time; from 'cooperative commonwealth' through 'socialistic pattern of society' to 'social and economic democracy'. With verbal advances in objectives, the gap between the promise and performance has also become larger and larger and the Congress has to face the challenge of this growing gap.

The challenge the Congress Party continues to face is to find acceptable ways and means of raising productive efficiency rapidly without giving the mass of people the feeling that they are being cheated out of the gains of development. It is true that the redistributive aspects of socialism presuppose a high level of development and productivity and that India is still at a stage of development where she is struggling to accelerate her economic growth and attain a genuine economic break-through. But having made her political choice and adopted universal adult franchise, the option of making socialism a consequence of economic development is no longer available to her. The mass political consciousness which is both aroused and enabled to find expression through democratic processes cannot be stifled.

**E**ven while recognizing the difficulties in reconciling the claims of growth and those of equity, a more equitable distribution of income-earning opportunities could be made available to promote economic growth itself. Since the rural component of the policy complex which touches millions of people gives rise to the more difficult political and organisational problems, it is to these that the observations here may be confin-



ed. Reluctance to effect the reforms required to give real economic incentives to small farmers and tenants has been pronounced, whether in implementing legislations on land ceilings, rent reductions, security of tenures, confirmation of ownership rights or the distribution of inputs like fertilizer and seeds. No effort was or is being made to reverse these trends significantly. The absence of such a reversal may result in slowing down the recent successes we have had with new varieties of wheat.

The fact that the small farmers are getting left out of the benefits of the new agricultural strategy has started having its political impact in the swing of the small farmers' affiliation to other more radical parties. For example, the erosion of the Congress Party from rural Bengal can be seen from the following table.

#### WEST BENGAL

S. No.	District	No. of seats	Seats won in 1969	Seats won in 1970
1.	Bankura	13	9	0
2.	Burdwan	25	14	2
3.	24-Paraganas	50	12	4
4.	Midnapur	35	11	6
5.	Birbhum	14	7	0
6.	Purulia	11	7	3

Without a policy of support and discrimination, both in the field of reforms and development, in favour of the small farmers in agriculture, it may not be possible to ensure their serious involvement in the development process itself. So far, however, things have gone the other way round.

With the inevitable conversion of the Congress Party to an electoral machine, the demands of the machine prevailed and its agricultural policies began to articulate, the interests of the dominant

peasant groups. The socio-economic base of the traditional power of the dominant peasant castes, much strengthened by the economic plans, has been further reinforced by their control over the 'vote banks'. Their rising incomes almost entirely escape the net of direct taxes. The economic feasibility of raising resources for development from this sector has never been in any serious doubt. It is the lack of political will to do so. Even American writers are now getting worried about some of these facts.

In the April issue of *Foreign Affairs* under the title of 'The Green Revolution: Cornucopia or Pandora's box?' Wharton fears that 'as a result of different rates in the diffusion of the new technology, the richer farmers will become richer. In fact, it may be possible that the more progressive farmers will capture food markets previously served by the smaller semi-subsistence producer. In India, only 20 per cent of the total area planted to wheat in 1967-68 consisted of new dwarf wheats, but they contributed 34 per cent of the total production. Such a development could well lead to a net reduction in the income of the smaller, poorer and less venture-some farmers.'

Similarly, in a country where unemployment and underemployment is widespread one of the principal means of reducing the disparity of incomes would be a rapid expansion of employment opportunities. At the present stage of development, when the scope for shifting the work-force from the rural to the non-rural sector is limited, employment could be generated in the rural areas through rural works programmes for the creation of overheads in agriculture each as reclamation of land, bringing uncultivated soil under the plough, soil conservation, afforestation, minor irrigation, feeder roads and other rural works.

For one reason or another these programmes were more talked

about than planned about. Indeed, even the rich farmer who is successfully evading the exchequer could have perhaps paid for implementing at least some parts of this programme. A revamped land revenue system, made more progressive by superimposing on it a surcharge on a graduated scale plus a small turnover tax in the form of a deduction from the procurement price paid to the farmers, can yield sizeable resources to finance a worthwhile programme of rural works which will have some impact on unemployment and at the same time promote agricultural development.

Again, the demand for education in the countryside is as intense as the demand for new inputs. Education is an investment in the human factor which increases productivity, enlarges opportunities for gainful employment and helps develop a modern outlook. It will make farm extension services and family planning programmes far more effective than they would otherwise be. The purely economic returns on investment in education are far greater than in many economic projects. It will also redress the existing inequalities of opportunity created by over-emphasis on higher education. And yet education has not spread out to the rural poor as much as it could have.

None of the above measures can be called excessively radical, least of all revolutionary. On the contrary, their implementation within the existing economic structures would not have been difficult at all. The fact that this has not happened so far is a measure of the extent to which the Kulak-oriented policies have made Congress programmes go awry. But this in itself is no evidence that the possibilities of India's mixed economy have been exhausted. More probably, it is an opportunity for the emerging elements in the Congress and outside to complete the unfinished tasks.

# Checking the drift

RASHEEDUDDIN KHAN

CONTEMPORARY politics in India, in its main thrust and overall strategy, is really *the politics of national reconstruction*; notwithstanding the variations in tactics and differentiation in perspectives of most of the competing parties. Looked restrictively from the angle of the paucity of resources limiting and restraining the unfolding of that strategy, it appears, albeit negatively, to use a greatly popularised term, *the politics of scarcity*, even as from other and more positive angles it has been variously designated as *the politics of modernization*, *the politics of integration* and *the politics of development*. But, however perceived, the current Indian politics has now reached a dangerous cross-roads. There is a threat to the genuine growth of the

emerging open society as also to the values of modernized political culture that has been assiduously sustained by the votaries of the world's largest developing society's most hopeful experiment in participatory democracy.

The threats are exclusively political. The anarchic fringe of the Naxalites, apart from standing too exposed as an aberration in the glare of political reality, has no decisive support of the masses, the classes or the well-entrenched pressure-groups. To be fair, they serve as reminders of the terrible brutality to which genuine men of political passion, provoked ironically by deep compassion for the wretched of the land condemned to misery under an unjust dispensation, can go in sheer

dehumanized desperation. The Naxalites and other doctrinaire communists receive scant support from the expanding political population of India to merit any serious consideration. Reduced to this proportion, they serve a political purpose of keeping defaulting democracy on tenterhooks.

If the main challenges facing India are recognized as the completion of the unfinished social revolution by the breaking of monopolies and the hold of the parasitic elite; of secularization of politics and rationalization of differentiated institutions to stabilize a modernized democracy; of economic growth unimpeded by the political prerogatives of the entrenched propertied classes; then the 'Left' parties and 'Left' articulation, despite their known fixations and fear of pragmatic flexibility not to mention the occasional nonsense of self-righteousness and disgusting infantile urge for characterizing 'every one' and 'every event' from the standpoint of their rigid ideological posture, are nonetheless the most necessary political ingredients of radical change. In fact, no ideological strand in the entire range of developing societies the world over reflects more genuinely the urges and aspirations of the common man in their basic assumptions as the Leftists do. Often they articulate national sentiments in a modern idiom more powerfully than their opponents do, who yet have the temerity to charge them, in season and out of season with an international focus of allegiance.

The tragedy of the 'Left' is that its more organized segments dissipate much of their energy in endless academic debates about the 'strategy' and 'tactics' of the 'objective situation', until 'situation' after 'situation' goes on changing, and the leadership remains two steps behind. Doubtful about others, they are more doubtful about themselves. Some leaders of the 'Left' are men who by sentiment and mental make-up are so admirably suited to be in

our universities that their continuance in politics is a loss to the academic world, without being a corresponding gain to politics. The relevance of the 'Left' in progressive nation-building, in stabilizing the foundations of a self-reliant economy and in inculcating a modernized ethos is too positive to label it as a threat in the conditions of contemporary India.

Within the realm of probability the threat is not of military take-over either, as theoretically that apprehension can be precluded due to the significant absence of ethnic, regional, linguistic, caste and communal homogeneity of the army ranks (which is so very critical a factor for the stabilization of an army rule). Then the hugeness of the country, the regional variations and the acute political consciousness of the otherwise 'incompetent masses' to borrow Michel's expression, are factors which no army can control for any length of time, quite apart from the non-political nature of the Indian army, and fairly secure institutionalization of civil authority.

But, even if an adventurist praetorian elite prompted by fascist political elements, attempts to erode civilian sovereignty, it is most unlikely if in the conditions of contemporary India it can ever succeed in legitimizing its usurpation. Analogies of army excursions into political life in Latin American, West Asian or even South-east Asian countries cannot stand any closer scrutiny. A bloody civil war is a more real, even if an abnormal and a disastrous possibility, or (allowing conjecture to run amuck) a military intervention of a super power in the name of regional security and world's balance of power could be academically more tenable than a decisive coup d'etat at the federal level of the Republic of India.

The major threat to India's continuing quest for a federal identity and functioning democracy then comes essentially from those who are averse to radical change, from those who see in the revolu-

tionary transformation of this 'wretched-beloved' land to a modern egalitarian polity a threat to their hegemony and ascendancy. These are the obscurantists, the literate and illiterate conservatives, the chauvinists and the communalists, the feudals and the decadents, the congenital reactionaries and the apologists of monopoly-capitalism, the ill-advised even if well-motivated leaders and the uncritical modernists, who congregate more often than not in the Rightist parties and in the Right-wing of the Congress

The intimate and direct relationship between economic power and political power is too evident to be emphasized. The private sector of economy, the big-business being the biggest beneficiary of the mixed economy pattern unfolded in two decades of political liberalism, has acquired such a solid political base in parties, factions, lobbies and elite groups that any serious move to abridge its economically detrimental 'privileges' and socially injurious 'rights' meets with a furore that shakes the citadels of power.

Within the framework of the operating political system, the available options to confront the threat are not many. Viewed more narrowly in terms of the structural-cum-ideological alternatives, the major options are just two, which on a closer look appear really two aspects of the same option, namely, i) reorganization of the Congress based on organizational cohesion, programmatic specificity and ideological clarity giving it the indelible stamp of creative centrism, thereby restoring the *one-dominant party system*, or ii) activation of the process of ideological polarization for the eventual emergence of a *dominant two-party system*, if Congress fails to develop its balancing centrist-based consensus on which alone depends the renewal of the now inoperative one-dominant party system.

Five assumptions are relevant while formulating the two alter-

natives. For the viable continuance of the democratic political system, three types are ruled out, namely, 'one-party', 'multi-party' and 'no effective parties' system. While the first one represents a different political culture, the other two have demonstrated increasing dysfunctionality in their working.

Secondly, the ascendancy of the 'Rightists' is no alternative but indeed the lack of it, since it would entail the rise of reactionary authoritarianism, akin to the fascist paranoid and with accentuated obscurantism, which already has a fertile base in such a classic traditional society of the world whose dominant belief-pattern has institutionalized and given a certain sophistication to superstition, myth and ethnic irrationality. The organized 'Right' in India has two strands: one representing the modernized vested interest, free-enterprise and adherent of capitalist liberalism, and the other the revivalists, the traditionalists and the communalists. Since both the strands overlap each other, the Right parties or Right factions include both the strands.

Thirdly, the splintered Left parties lack even coalitional cohesion thereby precluding the possibility of the emergence of a united Left 'front' that is, independent of the active support of the Congress Left, as a power to be reckoned with at the federal level—the only decisive level relevant for the exercise of an all-India authority.

Fourthly, the viability of the Congress as a distinct entity depends only on its becoming a 'Centrist' party. Otherwise, the compulsions of the new stage of political development in India sooner rather than later, would generate a process of fragmentation of the Congress due to its manifest ideological amorphousness, compositional heterogeneity and organizational flabbiness that would result in its virtual collapse, even if in name as a shadow of

its former self it lingers on for while. This would entail in its wake an adverse repercussion on the stability of the democratic political system of the country itself.

Fifthly, the emergence of the Congress as an authentic 'Centrist' party, given its continental dimensions and preponderance in the political system would not only not obviate the necessity of eventual ideological polarization but that precisely because of its stability as a 'Centrist' party it would create propitious conditions for such a polarization without disrupting the system.

Attempt is made in this paper to restrict the discussion to some aspects of the first of the two alternatives, and to amplify the content of only the last two of the five assumptions, i.e., those appertaining to the Congress.

'I am convinced' wrote Gandhiji with an unmistakable tinge of ethical pathos, which indeed was the hallmark of most of his political writings, 'that no patch-work treatment can cure the Congress. It will only prolong the agony. The best thing for the Congress would be that it should dissolve itself before the rot sets in further. Its voluntary liquidation will brace up and purify the political climate'. Gandhiji said that with the liberation of the country the Congress has fulfilled its cherished task, and the time had come for it to give place to, what he called, 'the purely political parties', and advised that 'the Congress should flower into a *Lok Sewak Sangh*'. However, Jawaharlal Nehru's sagacious insistence, that without the Congress, to which really power was transferred by the retreating British paramount power, the supreme task of the political unification of the sovereign nation and the establishment of a parliamentary democracy would remain undone, served undoubtedly a historic purpose.

But, the point for us to note is the rather strange and pointed re-

levance of Gandhiji's suggestion in the context of the current situation in the Congress in the year of grace, 1969. The underlying implications of his contention may be amplified to mean at least three things: that the Congress is too amorphous a body to get reduced to the size of a coherent party; that by its sheer bulk it ought not to arrest the growth of other 'purely political parties'; that the basic task of social reconstruction can be better served by the Congress, which really remains, and ought to remain, a 'movement'.

The real dilemma facing the Congress is that it has ceased to be a 'movement' without really becoming a 'party'. The confusion is worst confounded because it has all the inherited attributes of a movement—organizational amorphousness, heterogeneity of membership composition, all-inclusiveness in terms of divergent ideological accommodation, capacity to internalize the conflict and mechanisms of compromise to reconcile opposite view-points and interests, etc.—except its clear direction and unified and dedicated commitment to an objective. It needs to be remembered that while movements *per se* have an in-built flexibility of organization and composition because they aspire to be all-inclusive, they never exhibit an ambivalence in major objective, or deviation in the pursuit of that objective.

For instance, the Indian National Congress itself has been one of the world's most outstanding and successful prototypes of a 'movement', which unified all sections of the people and their groups and segments and fused them into a mighty collective whole that solidly struggled for the liberation of the motherland. Once independence came, the political context had qualitatively changed. In this milieu, the Congress, or any other organization could remain or aspire to become a 'movement' only if it remained outside the institutions of power and the organs of government. This is a vital distinction. Political movements

after capturing power normally get transformed into the power structure itself and into an organization that recruits leadership cadre to mediate that power structure.

**T**he Congress only partially succeeded in doing this because of three limitations. Firstly, unlike other analogous movements for independence, the Congress was too firmly committed to the establishment of a parliamentary democracy run by a competing party system. This precluded in theory the possibility of the Congress becoming the exclusive organization to monopolize the power structure, even if in fact (but by observing largely the rules of the democratic game and not by coercion) it did become the dominant political force.

Secondly, the top leaders of the Congress were really national leaders (particularly like Jawaharlal Nehru who often had a decisive majority in the country, even if occasionally he had a minority in the party) who after independence also continued to enjoy, by and large, a consensual national approbation. For such a leadership it was not possible subjectively to overcome the fact that the Congress was no longer a 'movement', and objectively to realize that the Congress could really become a party if it acquired organizational and ideological coherence.

Thirdly, the unprecedented influx of the neo-power-seekers into the ranks of the Congress, which was so 'permanently' identified with the Establishment, resulted in making it an odd medley of persons and groups.

It represents by itself an autonomous political system, more widespread in its membership, deeper in its organization, more extended in its regional appeal and more bedevilled by ideological conflicts and personality tussles, than all the other parties in India put together.

The main challenge facing the Congress today is to transform

itself into a genuine political party. It is called a party more in the generic than in the specific sense. It cannot any longer continue as a forum of diffuse ideology and of mutually contradictory interests, without weakening its popular appeal. With the maturity of the Indian political system demonstrated partially by the fourth general elections and by the working of non-Congress coalitions and by the decisive shift in favour of 'specificity' consequent on the increasing interest-orientation and pronounced demand-articulation, which are but natural in this stage of development, the Congress can continue in its present amorphous form only under the peril that bit by bit its components might drop out or be rendered ineffective by mutual cross-fire and the increasing lure of the coherent parties to its potential defectors.

**I**n facing this challenge two imperatives are called for—the imperative of ideological coherence and the imperative of organizational cohesion.

The talk of decline of ideology in our milieu misses two valid points. In this stage of socio-economic growth of countries still struggling to undo the imbalances created by colonial exploitation, the stupendous task of nation-building can never be achieved without a certain coherence of national objectives and programmatic specificity. For this, *ad-hocism* is no answer. Then the interlinked basic political task of reconciling territorial and national integrity without compromising the plural character of the nation, its socio-cultural diversities, and genuine demands for autonomies without which the fabric of an open society would be torn to pieces, needs more than expedient decisions and piecemeal projects. It needs and ideological perspective which alone can take into account the components without losing sight of the totality. Needless to add, in this sense ideology constitutes the content but not the form; a context but not a substitute for

action; the tool of comprehension and change but not the sole mainspring of policy decisions.

**T**he term 'ideology' is used in this paper more in the Weberian eclectic sense than as the Marxian analysts would use it. For, the latter with the sharpness of their characterisation would not permit the usage a latitude without which it is difficult to apply the term in less coherent situations. Max Weber in connection with his theory of the 'Protestant Ethic', speaks about an 'elective affinity' between 'ideas' and 'interests'. Social groups tend to 'select' 'ideas' that are congenial to their 'interests'. In this sense ideas are 'time-bound' and culture-bound'. This is now so much a well-known part of the sociology of knowledge. But by any reckoning 'ideology' does entail a more-or-less coherent 'world-view' of things and events and their relationship; a 'belief-system' about the normative arrangement of men in society and an 'inclusive perception' of the comprehensive reality'. And finally as Daniel Bell puts it, 'ideology is the conversion of ideas into social levers'.

As the country's most dominant political organization, the Congress in order to convert 'ideas' into 'social levers' will first have to delineate the contours of its ideology. In this process it will have to demythologize some of its heritage for, to use Marx's picturesque expression 'the tradition of all the dead generation weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living'. Since the twenties of this century, as a corollary to the extension of the Congress influence to every nook and corner of the country in order to give the independence movement its greatest popular legitimacy, the organization acquired certain revivalistic symbols, inducted large sections of the reactionary classes and the vested interests.

Under the benign leadership of Gandhiji, who articulated politics through what Morris-Jones calls 'the sacred idiom', obscurantism

got politicized. This did serve a partial organizational as also a political purpose; though the 'Ram-Rahim' approach exemplified in the Congress-Khilafat coalition not only underlined the virtual acceptance of the communal dichotomy, but also stalled the growth of modernized secular nationalism. One of Jawaharlal Nehru's greatest exertions in the Congress was to extricate the organization from communal, irrational and traditional focus. But one reason why he could not succeed was that most of his 'contemporaries' and 'successors' have been so out of tune with the challenges of the time that in terms of their outlook and perspective they are only fit to have been his 'predecessors'. Nehru's hesitant efforts to commit the organization to a Centrist ideology remained infructuous largely because they were not preceded or followed by concomitant efforts to, what he himself called, 'the purification' and 'revitalization of the party'.

Such is the nature of the ideological ambivalence of the Congress that, as Myron Weiner has noted, 'suffice it to say that since independence Congress has dominated the central range of the Indian ideological spectrum'. It has thus been guilty of what might be called 'political promiscuity' in cheerfully promoting honey-moons between strange bedfellows. This internalized application of Mao's prescription: 'let hundred flowers bloom, let hundred schools of thought contend' resulted in a political neurosis from which today the opposing leadership finds it difficult to escape.

But escape there is, if the approach of the 'more-the-merrier' is renounced in favour of the approach of 'better fewer but better'. While even if desired, the Congress cannot acquire a rigidity of ideology, for it represents the biggest cross-section of the citizenry, a fusion of disparate groups and competing interests, and has become quite rightly the GCM of India's political arithmetic. Yet,

even within such an extensive political demography there is a clear possibility of an ideological coherence as a creative Centrist party, if only a dedicated and bold leadership, imbued with a dynamic fervour could call a halt to hypocritical 'gimmickry' and manipulative politics and build a new national consensus on at least a few defined basic objectives, like those grouped here under the three major rubrics: National Identity, National Welfare and National Security.

**A. National Identity:** i) stabilization of the federal polity recognizing the right of the diverse regional, cultural, linguistic and communal groups to fashion their diversities without compromising the overall political integration; ii) secularization of politics and greater mobilization for participatory democracy.

**B. National Welfare:** iii) realization of a self-reliant economy based on planned, quick and overall economic growth, involving faster pace of industrialization, scrupulous implementation of land-reforms, improved farm techniques, efficient working of the nationalized institutions, elimination of monopolies and rational integration of private sector in the economy; iv) completion of the unfinished social revolution by the modernization of the society by all means including the promotion of scientific education, eradication of inequalities and other social disabilities.

**C. National Security:** v) maximization of national interests in the pursuit of a foreign policy attuned to world peace, regional integration and support to the people's movement for democracy and liberty; vi) preservation of the territorial integrity and national sovereignty by the modernization of the defence structure.

The objectives listed above are obviously illustrative rather than exhaustive, and need to be more specified. Consensus cannot be built by depoliticizing the 'explo-

sive' issues, but by a creative conflict on these very issues for building a stable structure of commitment. The challenge before the Congress is not merely of static political stability, but of dynamic political stability in order to maintain stability with the growth of democratic institutions and the equitable share in the prosperity of the country by the people. Heterogeneity of party members can be overcome by the homogeneity of outlook and a passionate adherence to a consensual programme of action for modernization and change.

A more difficult exercise for the Congress is to re-shape its organization. In fact, in the very process of creating an ideological cohesion, the organization would reveal an in-built inhospitality to the uncommitted spongers, the power-seeking parasites, and the political vagabonds. It needs to be stressed that because of its dominance in the party system the Congress itself was interested in inducting social groups and strata which had hitherto remained de-politicized in order to widen its mass base, and on the other hand, ambitious congregations were queueing up to don the 'white-cap', act *swadeshi* and chant some well known mantras of patriotism in order to get entry into the expanding channel of power. With this, a new pattern of political demography has emerged, which in terms of its composition, its aspirations, national goals, world-view and intra-party communication, is a complete break from the past.

The continuity of the Congress for 84 years, emphasized for the courtesy of history, is for purposes of contemporary politics really a 'notional' factor. To these new Congressmen who man the power-processes of the country's biggest 'organization in depth' to borrow Ivor Jennings's phrase, the pre-independence phase of the Congress has not much emotive relevance. To them Gandhiji, for instance, in terms of *real politik* which they face everyday, is

someone like a saint who strayed into the sordid business of politics in the 'pre-history' of the Congress only to create disturbing norms which are not operationable! His heritage appears to be as reverant and no less irrelevant as the ancient heritage of this glorious land.

Since independence, the Congress has been a macro-political system, a sort of a federal arrangement, holding together micro-sub-systems—the factions, forums, groups, lobbies, coteries, etc. which constantly interact on the political processes of the Congress. This vast infra-structure based on consideration of caste, interest, region and personality and reflecting in politics the divisions in society and the variegation of 'political animals' seeking power, has been maintained by the common eagerness of the decisive regional elite that has penetrated the echelons of power; once the Congress became the 'Establishment'. This 'collection for convenience, an aggregate for advantage' to borrow Morris-Jones' apt description, has changed the character of the Congress and the Congressmen. Their survival at the crest of power, and their capacity for political patronage depends on the continuance of the Congress as an amorphous body — ideologically and organizationally. This medley of leadership has no interest in principled politics, but only and exclusively in power politics. Obviously, therefore, so long as the intra-party conflict remains on the plane of a personal tussle for power, they exhibit inordinate capacity to reconcile in the name of party unity, but once any conflict escalates into the realm of major policy decision or reveals a tinge of ideological complexion, the Congress in punishment is brought to the very brink of catastrophe and split.

It will be pertinent to remember that nowhere in the world is there such a continental-type of political party, active not merely at election time but throughout and adhering to the parliamentary

form of organization. The United States' parties, for instance, are organized on different lines, whose structure, mechanics and argument of intra-party politics are quite different. For such an organization naturally a certain pragmatic flexibility is unavoidable. But should it be only at the expense of commitment; at the expense of policy coherence; at the expense of the social welfare premise on which the edifice of Congress politics was sought to be built by Jawaharlal Nehru?

There is no authentic all-India political organization, except the Congress, as all the other parties are either trans-regional, multi-State, one-State or sub-regional and local. In this sense, Congress alone is the national party, therefore the only party of a federal dimension. The Indian political system until 1967 had virtually rotated around the Congress, with other parties, sometimes smaller than certain factions of the Congress, playing an auxiliary role. Since the fourth general elections, however, with the collapse of the Congress monolith there had been a decisive shift in the Indian party system—the shift from 'monopoly of power' to 'competition of power'.

But, even in this phase, such has been the inequality in the share of power between the Congress and all the other non-Congress parties. (as for instance on August 1, 1969, in terms of the elected representatives, the Congress has an edge over all the other ten major parties: Swatantra, Jana Sangh, CPI, CPI(M), SSP, PSP, BKD, DMK, Muslim League, Akalis and other parties and Independents, in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha and over all the other parties listed above, but excluding the Independents and local unrecognized parties in all the 17 State Assemblies taken together. The figures are: 286 Vs 235 in Lok Sabha, 146 Vs 82 in Rajya Sabha, and 1,402 Vs 1,322 in the State Assemblies. Independents and other parties account for a total of 412 in the Assemblies), that

certain observers keeping the real dimension of power in view have said that the two-party system that is really emerging in India is made up not of the Congress and non-Congress coalitions, or of the Congress on the one hand and one or the other ideological cohesions on the other, but interestingly between the two wings of the Congress itself—the Congress government in power and the organizational wing of the party.

This is certainly not a new phenomenon. Ever since 1947, in one or the other form this tussle between the two wings has continued. The vigorous acrimony between Nehru and Kripalani and Nehru and Tandon (1947-51) on the equation of the two wings was never really settled, except that under the charisma of Nehru it was never raised after the initial tussle almost until his death. But it was anticipated in the very process of the succession to the Prime Ministership after Nehru that the organizational wing would tend to increase its authority, with the help of the regional potentates of the Congress. The coterie that has come to be popularly known as the Syndicate, is in essence the aggregation of the party's *satraps* who each by himself had essentially too much of a regional relevance to enjoy a national appeal, but as 'a set' could pool their resources of authority to impact major decisions of the Congress.

From one angle, the years between 1964 and 1969 were years of uneasy tension between the Syndicate and the Prime Minister. The increasing polarization that has so suddenly and dramatically taken a sharper turn within the Congress since the fateful Bangalore Session in July this year, and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's initiative in confronting the Syndicate both at the leadership level (Morarji Desai's ouster, open tussle with Nijalingappa and Co., on the issue of the Presidential election, the fury of the scorned Congress females: Tarakeshwari Sinha, Sucheta Kripalani, Sharda Mukher-



jee, etc.) and at the policy level (Note on Economic Policy sent to the Bangalore Session, Bank Nationalisation Ordinance and the subsequent Act passed with unprecedented swiftness, firmer commitment to socialist policies, threats of enquiries into the working of major houses of the private sector, particularly the Birlas, etc.) have portentous implications for the future of the Congress Party and for the new pattern of party politics that might emerge. It needs to be noted that while both the levels of conflicts—personality-cum-leadership and policy-cum-programme—have independent relevance, yet jointly as well they reveal a causality of relationship not merely in their timing and sequence, but, essentially in their objective implications to the Congress Party and indeed to the political system of India, which are too fundamental to be described as factional conflicts fought with ideological tools, as they are far in excess of whatever subjective motives might have finally provoked the events.

The margin of dominance in favour of the Congress has so much decreased since 1967, that if the proportion of decline in popular votes and seats continues as projected on the basis of the last four general elections, then in 1972 the Congress might as well be reduced to a minority in the Lok Sabha (as has been convincingly demonstrated in the poser). Figures appertaining to the decline in seats for instance are revealing. In the Lok Sabha the Congress seats declined by 18.4% (77.2% in 1962 to 58.5% in 1967). In the State Assemblies, it has gone down by 14.3% (61.9% in 1962 to 47.6% in 1967). The rate of decline has been varied, ranging from 0.7% in Andhra Pradesh to 46.5% in Tamil Nadu. In Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab, UP and West Bengal it varied from 12% to 18%, in Maharashtra and Mysore, 6% to 8% and in Rajasthan, 1.3%.

Nearly 1/5th of the seats in the Lok Sabha and 7% to 48% in the

State Assemblies have changed hands, revealing the extent of change and shift in political loyalty. Of these, one half went to the 'Right' parties (Swatantra and Jana Sangh), 1/3rd to 'Left' parties (CPI(M) and SSP) and 1/3rd to Independents and local and regional parties. It is significant that the Congress losses benefited the 'Right' more than the 'Left' both in the Lok Sabha and in most of the State Assemblies. The ratio works out to 2:1 in favour of the 'Right' and that too after arbitrarily including Independents, local and regional parties with the 'Left'.

The trends for the future are clearer today than before. One might conclude with a warning. The one-dominant party system can only be restored if Congress could well before the fifth general elections, set its house in order. This is only possible through the firmer reiteration of a 'Centrist' based consensus which in the current mood of the country has a fair chance of becoming a national consensus. Let there be an option for the uncommitted to go and an organizational discipline to eject the wayward in case they choose to remain without accepting the consensus. If this is not done then the Congress might have to face the prospects of getting dislodged from the federal authority and from such number of States which are capable of providing at least a workable balance between the Congress and the non-Congress governments in the all-India power-equation.

In the absence of a clear ideological polarization as of now, which might have laid the foundation of a viable two-party system, the eclipse of the Congress would only create a vacuum which no *ad-hoc* coalition will be able to fill. So much of the country's future unfortunately depends on the Congress power elites, that one cannot but hope that at least one dominant section of this elite would have the wisdom to check the drift towards chaos.



# Clarity of purpose

CHANDRA SHEKHAR

PEOPLE'S urges and aspirations for national emancipation from colonial subjugation gave birth to the Indian National Congress. Though subdued in the beginning, it slowly but steadily developed into a popular front for national struggle. It attracted various economic interests in its fold and successfully combined them for the common cause. Occasional attempts to give social and economic content to its objectives were made and in their very nature were broad guidelines which

gave expression to the far distant hopes of the millions. The call for solidarity with the common man and identification with the cause of the exploited classes provided the necessary atmosphere for the national struggle. The Congress in its struggle aroused hope among the neglected sections for a social transformation to bring in a new era of equality and economic freedom.

After independence, the Congress was faced with a new situa-

tion. Now, it was not a question of expressing laudable ideals and objectives but introducing basic changes in the structure of the society for achieving those objectives. During the struggle to overthrow the alien power, the structure of the Congress was all-embracing. The Congress organisation was a unique combination of divergent economic interests and it continued to remain the same even in the changed circumstances. To some extent this helped the party in maintaining its dominance in the political life of the country for over two decades. But, essentially, the acceptance of the Congress by the electorate was because of its past services and the immense popularity enjoyed by its leadership. The absence of any well organised alternate political party with well defined objectives at the national level, sharp division among the opposition parties, lack of popular awakening and awareness of the need for social transformation, were additional factors which enabled the Congress to gain a stable majority in the elected representatives all these years.

**T**his period of political stability should have been utilised by the Congress to reorient its organisation in tune with its declared social and political objectives. But unfortunately this opportunity was lost more by default than by intent. Jawaharlal Nehru made occasional attempts to introduce fresh thinking in the Congress and inject a few radical ideas in the formulation of its policies and programmes. But most of the other Congress leaders did not reconcile to these efforts and continued adherence to obsolete ideas. No one would dispute that the national struggle for freedom was fought by the Congress on the strength of the support of the large masses. In this process, the Congress, as a national political party, made promises for the amelioration of their living conditions in free India.

With the advent of independence it was natural that the ex-

pectations of the Indian population in general and the backward and oppressed classes in particular were aroused. However, immediately after independence, the country faced the problem of rehabilitation of the millions of refugees. The foremost question before everyone was: how to meet the post-partition crisis. All attention was focused on the immediate problems. It was also recognised that for any meaningful results of the efforts of the national government a few years would have to be allowed. Moreover, the enthusiasm and a sense of fulfilment of the long cherished goal was only too fresh to put an average man into a questioning mood.

For decades the Congress Party and its leadership organised mass demonstrations; attacked economic and political policies of the British Government. While leading a mass movement there was little time for them to work out a consistent programme of action for a time when they would be in power. After independence in 1947, all of a sudden the leadership found itself in a different role. From the agitational role, it had to shoulder the responsibility of translating the broad guidelines into specific policies and programmes of development. The new role was radically different for which, due to obvious reasons, very few Congress leaders were equipped. Yet, they had the strong fervour of nationalism and the promises held out to the millions were uppermost in their minds.

**T**he concern about the poor man's lot and the awareness of their duty towards the down-trodden and the mood of the Congress Party and Government in the years 1947-51 is well reflected in the framing of the Directive Principles of the Constitution, appointment of the Planning Commission, announcement of the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 and the acceptance of the public sector as a

two purpose instrument of growth and curbing of tendencies towards concentration in the economy. A notable step in this direction was the initiation of a large number of educational and welfare projects under the first five year plan. Some of these decisions were of basic character. There were also pronouncements regarding the future pattern of land ownership which did give an impression that the Congress governments were indeed anxious to pursue policies in accordance with the promises made earlier.

**W**hile declaring a somewhat more specific set of programmes, the Congress Party, and more so its leadership, failed to recognise the necessity of changing the instruments of implementation. In their desire to avoid any radical changes, which may appear as revolution, the same old administrative machinery evolved by the British to further their interests, was allowed to continue. The structure of the Indian bureaucracy was built up for revenue administration and its personnel and procedures were accordingly organised. In the acceptance of the same bureaucracy and their methods of functioning the Congress Government handed over the crucial task of implementation of the development policies in the hands of the least committed persons.

Apart from the lack of faith or commitment to the newly evolved national policies, the old civil servants had neither the competence nor the required perspective to discharge their new role effectively. In fact, a large section of them, and so the ones at the top, had contempt for Congress policies. Therefore, it should be no surprise to anyone to find that the Indian administrative system proved a complete failure in providing the necessary orientation to its functioning, resulting in defeat of the spirit of the various Congress policies and programmes.

At the political level the leadership, as said earlier, had a new role for which they had no ex-

perience and yet they only had to fill the top governmental positions. This certainly was the only alternative in the short run. But at that stage, the party had to realise the need for developing new cadre which had the necessary orientation for effective translation of the party programmes and policies. Unfortunately, the party failed to pay any attention to the task of establishing a regular channel for introducing and attracting new blood and the necessary professional competence in the organisation.

**T**he combined effect of (i) continuing the old bureaucratic set up, and (ii) neglect in building up the necessary cadre in the party was poor implementation which was used as an excuse to adopt a slow shift in emphasis on the need for radical changes. The approach to problems was increasingly more determined by immediate problems and various pressures than a clear cut perspective. The phenomenon was further helped by the unavoidable fact of aging of the Congress leadership accompanied by isolation from the young. The hold of the bureaucracy increased. This is quite evident from the manner in which all crucial positions in government and the public sector, many of which should have been manned by committed persons, were assigned to the I.C.S. and I.A.S.

The Congress as a political party, also failed to provide the necessary direction to its parliamentary wing. Supposing the policy of the Congress was to avoid injecting personnel in the administrative system who had political commitments, the task of working out detailed policies should have been taken up vigorously by the party itself. For this, again, very little effort was made to organise research, sponsor studies or establish communication with the intellectuals and professionals in the country. In fact, quite contrary to this one gets an impression that the Congress leadership has even tended to de-

pend upon the civil servants for their party briefs, background papers and other analysis for the Congress sessions. Inevitably, in such circumstances the leadership started drifting away from a proper understanding of the political and economic problems of the country.

These failures were responsible for the loss of the required consistency in the governmental decisions and the proclaimed policy framework. The only objective before the party has tended to be to gain power without special emphasis on any clear-cut objectives and the purpose for which the Congress stands. This also explains the fact that the Congress as it stands today has leaders having faith in completely different ideological beliefs. Even when the party as such has decided upon a certain economic programme, it is openly opposed by a few senior leaders without any fear or regard for unity of purpose or action. In a way both sections (progressives and reactionaries) have accommodated each other by avoiding direct conflict or any clear and firm insistence upon implementation of the accepted economic or political programmes.

**W**henver there were situations of likely confrontation, these were avoided in the name of Congress unity. It is because of this that at no stage has the party insisted on having a full review to assess the extent to which the Congress governments were successful in implementing the agreed programmes. As a ritual, on the eve of each general election the party has been re-affirming its faith in the earlier pronouncements. In fact, every time a few new phrases have been coined—which may give the impression that there was a fresh realisation of the problem and at each time it has appeared as if 'this' was a turning point in the history of the Congress.

However, in practice the promises have tended to remain hollow slogans without meaning

and purpose. The growing gulf between promises and realities could not but result in the slow erosion of faith by the masses in the party and its leadership. This has been the process, though unfortunate, yet unavoidable.

Another important factor which has been at play after independence is the emergence of the new classes as a result of the spread of education and improvements in the communication system. Some of the sections of the country which were isolated so far have been exposed to political awareness and education. Thanks to the spread of education and some other welfare programmes the scheduled and other backward classes have been slowly but definitely becoming conscious of their rights and the extreme poverty in which they have been made to suffer for generations.

Even though the exposure to political education has been limited, it has been sufficient to create a new awareness. It is a healthy process. It should be welcomed. But as a political party the Congress should have paid special attention to harness these emerging forces in the country. Apart from the pure partisan viewpoint, the Congress as a premier organisation owed these classes a special duty. But, unfortunately, very little imagination was shown by the Congress to encourage and guide these classes in the proper direction. And due to their immaturity, many a time they have been misled and politically exploited by local interests.

**T**he failures of the Congress are evident. But the impact of its inability to take positive and appropriate measures has not been confined to its own self. The manner of functioning of the Congress also had a very far reaching influence in shaping the development of other political parties in the country. For instance, finding that the Congress Party had

continued in power without any proof of its seriousness to implement economic programmes, no other political party considered it necessary to pay serious attention to fighting elections on the basis of a well stated economic and political programme.

On the other hand, many a communal, reactionary and regional party was able to show better performance at elections on the strength of local issues or by exploiting sentimental and parochial feelings of the voters. And for this the Congress Party has to own squarely the responsibility for not having set the tone for other political parties. The Congress, as the biggest national political party and having been in power at the Centre since independence, had the obligation to set healthy traditions in the building up of a proper political system in the country.

Many a time it is said that since independence the Congress Party has been consistently losing support from the voters. For this observation, reliance is placed upon the voting pattern during the last four general elections. One does not know how far one can base any such general conclusion on these statistics. It must be realised that there has not been any significant shift in the Congress share of the total votes polled. What, however, is true is that Congress' share in the Parliament and State Legislature seats has declined. This has been especially so where all opposition parties joined in a common front against Congress. In a large many constituencies, during the last elections, there was a direct encounter between the Congress on one side and all other political parties on the other.

It is curious that in their desire to fight the Congress some of the progressive parties did not hesitate to enter into election alliances with the most reactionary or communal parties. What does this indicate? It only suggests that the non-Congress parties have

fought elections in union but without having any common ideology or economic programme. Thus, a higher number of seats by the opposition in some States, resulting in opposition governments, is not always an indication of the declining popularity of the Congress.

While dealing with the place of the Congress at the elections it is necessary to admit that many of the failures of the Congress candidates were not because of the unpopularity of the party. These were more so as defeats of the individuals who, though discredited in the public eye, were accepted by the Congress as its candidates. In this reference, the role played by certain 'bosses' in their personal power struggles, has been an important factor. The hold over the central organisation of the party has continued far too long in the same old hands. None of the senior leaders have attempted to step down from high political positions even when they failed to get elected in their home constituencies. Added to this is the capacity of the few to collect funds for the party. Quite often in discussions it is made out that the 'fund raisers' are indispensable. The assumption is that the success of the party at the polls was directly dependent upon the amount of money spent during elections.

Such a belief is not only misplaced but mischievous. It has to be recognised that political parties can only survive if they have something concrete to offer to the masses. The popular support is not a commodity that can be purchased. There are no short cuts to political success either. But, apart from the question of success or failure in forming a government, the real issue before the Congress today is 'what is the purpose of a political party?'. Is it to gain power for its own sake? Or, is the gaining of power a means to achieve and pursue certain ideals? I would any day opt for the latter.

# Books

**THE CONGRESS PARTY OF INDIA :** By Stanley A. Kochanek, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968.

The post-independence situation presented a highly complex problem of adjustment for the Congress Party. During the freedom struggle, it was a single-minded organisation and its president was the supreme leader of the nation. The description of the Congress President as *Rashtrapati* and of its Working Committee as the High Command was not with-

out meaning. It could not be the same when the government passed into Indian hands and India took to adult-franchise and the democratic order. The government was to be elected by the entire adult population of the country. Obviously the head of the government represented a wider section of the people than the president of the Congress. He, therefore, commanded wider allegiance and exercised greater power.

This change of roles was not easily accepted and the Congress Party had to pass through different

phases of relationship between the heads of the government and the party. This evolution is the subject of this scholarly work by Stanley A. Kochanek, Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Pennsylvania State University. Besides tracing the course of this relationship he has also described the composition and role of the Congress working Committee and its two sub-committees, the Parliamentary Board and the Election Committee.

He has come to the conclusion that 'The power, prestige and patronage of the Prime Minister has developed over the years to the point that Congressmen look to the Prime Minister and not to the Congress President for leadership.' This, however, does not imply that a Prime Minister has or would always enjoy undisputed supremacy. Even Jawaharlal Nehru had to struggle hard for at least five years (from 1946 to 1951) before he could achieve full control over the situation. During this period the weight of his personality and the demise of his only powerful rival, Sardar Patel, cleared the way for him. He had to revolt openly against the Congress President when Tandon was elected to that office against his wishes.

The first dispute arose in 1946 when Acharya Kripalani insisted that as Congress President he should be consulted on all the affairs of the government. This position was unacceptable not only to Nehru but to the other members of the government also. They were of the opinion that if the day to day affairs of the government were to be placed before the organisational High Command the authority of the Cabinet would be undermined and secrecy would be difficult to maintain. Acharya Kripalani had to resign.

Later presidents also found difficulties in adjustment until in 1951 Nehru himself took over that office. Thereafter it became very clear that the Congress president had to accept a less important position vis-a-vis the Prime Minister. It was clearly put by N. Sanjiva Reddy in his Presidential Address at the Bangalore session of the Congress in 1960. 'I am fully aware' he said, 'that the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress does not carry the same weight as it did before, during the days of the freedom struggle.'

The men who came to occupy the Presidency did not always accept the inferior position with good cheer. Sanjeeva Reddy is reported to have bitterly complained to a friend that as Congress President he was treated as 'Mrs. Gandhi's chaprassi'.

In fact the attempt was never relaxed by the organisation men to use the party as a lever for securing control over the government. The first move was to reduce the government representation in the Working Committee. It could not succeed because then its authority would have been further reduced. The tussle however led to the formation of Working Committees in which the majority of members were drawn from factions opposed to the

Prime Minister. The other way in which the party could and did extend its dominance over the government, in various degrees, was through its ticket distributing authority; the Central Election Committee was usually weighted in favour of the Congress President.

Also, in times of factional disputes in the States, the Parliamentary Board, another sub-committee of the CWC entirely nominated by the Congress President, came into operation as the reconciler or arbiter. Such disputes being more bitter and pronounced in the States, the writ of the organisation ran more in the States than at the Centre. That is why the organisation men in the States control the governments and whenever the Congress President has been able to assert himself as at the time of succession, he has done so with the active help of the State satraps.

Professor Kochanek has refrained from making any projections into the future. The study is strictly a factual analysis of the process from 1946 to 1967. Keeping out the ideological considerations and the political forces that have impinged on this process make it rather bare and naked. For a student of current affairs however it is a useful reference book because of the wealth of material collected and the neat periodisation. It yields more in terms of the time period. A study in depth combined with it could be very fruitful at a time when the fate of Congress has become a matter of controversy.

The author has made an analysis of the composition of the mass organisation of the party. The result of this analysis gives a clue to the impasse in which we find the Congress today. Professor Kochanek has come to the conclusion that 'the decision makers do not reflect a cross section of society...they do not even reflect a cross section of the party base itself'. He has, however, refrained from taking it to the logical end to show why the party is getting alienated from the people.

D. R. Goyal

**PARTY BUILDING IN A NEW NATION:** By Myron Weiner, The University of Chicago Press, 1967.

The Congress Party of India is a unique phenomenon. It has provided a stable government to a vast country of bewildering diversities and conflicting interests for over two decades while its counterparts in other new nations failed almost everywhere to absorb the first exposures to the reality of running the administration. It should have attracted the attention of sociologists and political scientists as here was a viable vehicle of social advance and modernisation successfully functioning in a free society. But it did not for quite some time. It is only when the stability began to shake that scholars began to study it in depth and detail. This book by Myron

Weiner is an essay in understanding this phenomenon as a case study to throw light on the problems of party building in a new nation.

Making a comprehensive survey and analysis of this leviathan spread over this vast country would require the labour of years and the collective effort of many scholars. Weiner has adopted the method of sample analysis and generalisation on the basis of the common factors that emerge. He has taken five districts—Kaira in Gujarat, Belgaum in Maharashtra, Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, Calcutta in West Bengal and Madurai in Tamilnadu—as his subject matter. The sample can be called fairly representative from the viewpoint of development stratification but it would have become more comprehensive if he had also included a district from U.P. or Bihar, another from Punjab, Haryana or Himachal Pradesh and a third from Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh.

The present sample is confined to what is usually described as the coastal regions. No study of Indian politics, much less of the Congress Party would be entirely satisfactory if it keeps the Hindi heartland out of its purview. This area throws light on the motivations of several attitudes and movements that have over the years affected the political scene of the country and the fortunes of the political organisations. It should not be forgotten that a large majority of the political elite has been thrown up by this region.

But here we are concerned more with what has been served to us by Weiner than with what he has chosen to omit. He has set out to understand the factors that have made for the 'success' of the Congress Party and this success he has taken in terms of 'recruiting new members, winning competitive elections and avoiding fragmentation'.

The author has discussed in detail how the Congress Party has not gone down under the tremendous strain of the transition from traditionalism to modernity and from being a movement struggling against an alien government into a party running the administration of a democratic country where every adult has a vote. He finds that the party has shown remarkable resilience in adapting itself to the new role; it has also exhibited tremendous capacity not only to reconcile the diverse elements within it but also in absorbing new elite groups that emerged in the post-independence period.

The analysis of this feature is very interesting. It has been noted that while the Congress elite before independence was predominantly the urban educated middle class, they have without much difficulty shared power, when it came, with the less educated rural power elite who came into their own in free India. According to the author, this process was facilitated on the one hand by the conflicts within the new aspiring groups and on the other by the needs and requirements of competition among leaders of the Congress within the party. The former secured the Congress against any possible domination by a

new group and there was no effort to resist new elements.

The latter factor made the Congress leaders reach out of the old groves to recruit new groups to strengthen their own position. As the total amount of power and patronage to be shared was growing with the government extending its operation on a wider scale of national life, everybody was able to get more, thus reducing rivalries.

By virtue of its character and position, the Congress provided a large variety of 'incentives' for people to swell its rank. The modernists found it attractive because of the party's stress on such aspects of policy as integration, secularism and economic development. For those devoted to the ideals of social justice and upliftment of the poor it had programmes like Harijan welfare and the slogans of socialism. Those who sought status and power with the opening of new possibilities did not have a better instrument. Above all Congress was the only party which could meet the demands for roads and wells in villages and for loans and licenses in towns.

The party has a wide net-work all over the country which made it the most effective vote-gathering machine. Its workers maintained contact with people through what Weiner describes as the 'expediting, arbitral and constructive work' activities. By virtue of belonging to the ruling party, Congressmen had greater access and influence on administration and could 'serve' the people better. The first choice of an entrant on a political career was the Congress.

The party also has a fairly satisfactory mechanism of contact between the various levels of the hierarchy. One mode of communication is the sending of circulars from the top to the lower units and receiving reports from below. The lacunae in this are filled by the visits of top party functionaries to the lower units.

There are bound to arise disputes and conflicts in a vast organisation. Weiner finds that they have been so far kept down and not allowed to reach breaking point. The success in conflict resolution has been attributed to four major factors: (i) the disputes are mostly non-ideological; (ii) the multiplicity of factional and parochial groups, the interplay of which saves a final break; (iii) a near monopoly of the party over patronage which acts as a deterrent on the non-ideological groups and individuals to quitting the party; (iv) the vested interest of the leadership in the unity of the party without which they would lose their grip over power.

Having analysed the phenomenon of success the author does point out that despite all these positive factors favouring Congress it may not continue to hold sway for long in future. Compromise and consensus which helped it all these decades to reconcile the conflicting demands of modernisation and a traditional society may, at a certain stage

become a hindrance to progress, thereby impairing the image of the party. Moreover, 'no party can hope to remain in power indefinitely' in a free society. The Congress is, in his opinion, bound to be defeated. Whether it would be able to prevent disintegration after loss of power is a relevant question the answer to which one does not find in this analysis.

The question has become all the more pressing after the General Elections of 1967 when the Congress lost power in almost half the country. The phenomenon has not been analysed in the book although the author has taken cognisance of it. Instead of attempting an answer to the question 'After Congress what?' he has closed the study with a set of questions: 'Will India move in the direction of the French Third and Fourth Republics with a succession of shortlived unstable coalitions? And with what long term consequences? Immobilist central authority? Civil strife between contending parties? A scramble by Left and Right-wing opposition parties for support within Congress as each seeks a majority by pulling out sympathisers from a disintegrating Congress party? A non-party government under the authority of the president of India? A military dictatorship?'

All these questions are today scattered in the arena of Indian politics. The Congress party may re-emerge if it can inspire the country with a new idealism. Compromise perhaps has exhausted its possibilities.

Seminarist

**THE POLITICS OF DEFECTION: A Study of State Politics in India** By Subhash C. Kashyap, National Publishing House, Delhi, 1969.

With the fourth general election, a new era of doubts and uncertainties began. The frequent breakdown of the 'constitutional machinery' in several States and the consequent imposition of President's rule, on the basis of the reports received from the Governors, raised serious doubts about the federal aspect of the Indian Constitution, which found expression in the demand for revision of the existing relations between the Centre and the States. Incidentally, this was the battle-cry of the non-Congress governments of Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

To this may be added the uncertainties which resulted from the fact that for the first time, in the wake of the fourth general election, the political power in the States of Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh passed into the hands of non-Congress governments, as a consequence of unprincipled mass scale defections from the legislative wings of the Congress Party.

It is against this background that the 'politics of defection' needs to be viewed. Although, political defections were not completely unknown in the decade preceding the fourth general election, yet,

the fact remains that they have gathered unprecedented momentum, only, during the last three years. In quantitative terms, it has been estimated that approximately 542 legislators defected during 1957-67 and 438 defections took place during 1967-68. Another peculiar feature which deserves to be noted is that in the former period the defections imparted stability to the Congress ministries as the Congress legislative parties gained at the expense of the Independents, the PSP, the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra. In the latter period, defections from the Indian National Congress led to the formation of 'Splinter Groups', which resulted, on the one hand, in the downfall of the Congress ministries, and, on the other, in the rise of non-Congress ministries in which the distribution of ministerial offices was remarkably favourable to the Congress defectors.

Intra-party factionalism, which was always present in the background right from the day the task of governing this country was assumed by the Indian National Congress, moved to the centre of the stage with an increase in the intensity of the inter-party struggle, resulting from the dwindled strength of the Congress Party in the State legislatures.

In this connection, the author of the book under review says: 'The high tempo unprincipled defections might not have been reached but for the political conceit, demoralization and miscalculations of the Congress Party in being unwilling to share power by entering into coalitions with like-minded democratic parties. For example, in coalition with parties like the PSP, the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra, the Congress could have formed fairly stable governments in several of the States where it was still the single majority party. Such coalitions under the prevailing circumstances would have been not only entirely possible but highly desirable. They would have achieved the much-sought-for stability and prevented the much condemned allurements of ministerial offices for back-benchers in small minority groups resulting in many defections and counter-defections. But used to monopoly of power for some twenty years, Congress was perhaps unprepared to agree to share it. If the Congress party wants to recover some of the lost ground it will have to seek alliances with like-minded established parties.'

From the above, it becomes obvious that Kashyap's therapy for the present malady is a coalition of 'like-minded democratic parties'. This is precisely what the 'Party Bosses' (Syndicate) have been striving for. The snags in this approach are quite obvious.

In fact, there is complete alienation between the majority of the rank and file of the party and the minority of the 'Bosses', who consider it their sacred duty to freeze the process of social and economic change. Thus, any such coalition of Rightist reactionary parties would negate the urges and aspirations of the majority in the interests of the well entrenched minorities with vested interests.

Ved Gupta



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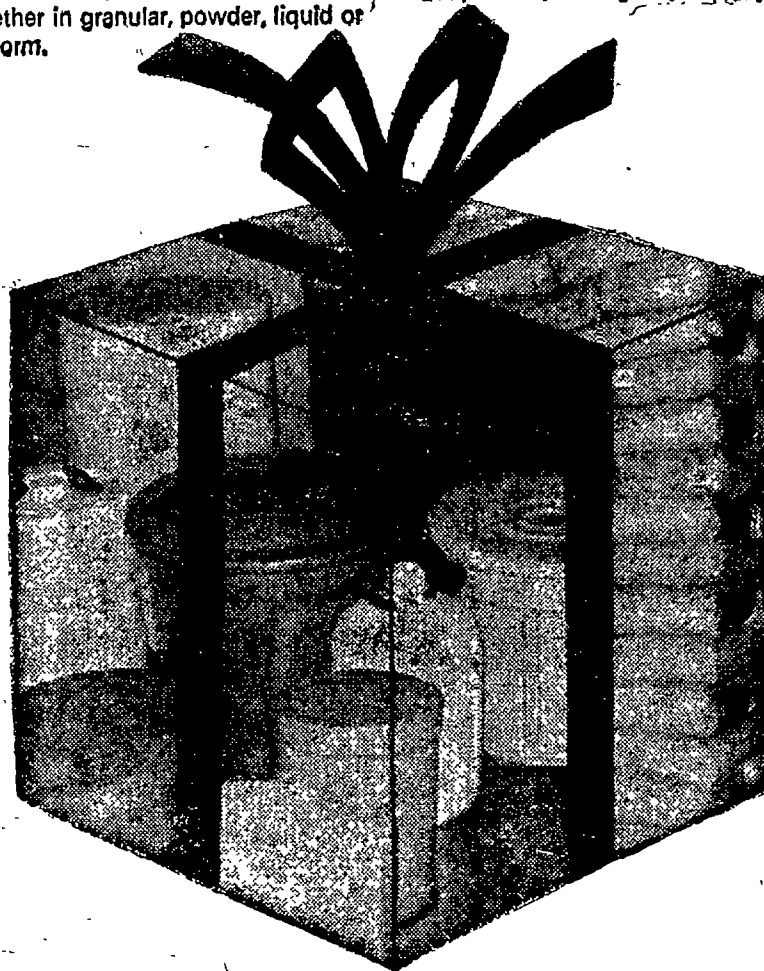
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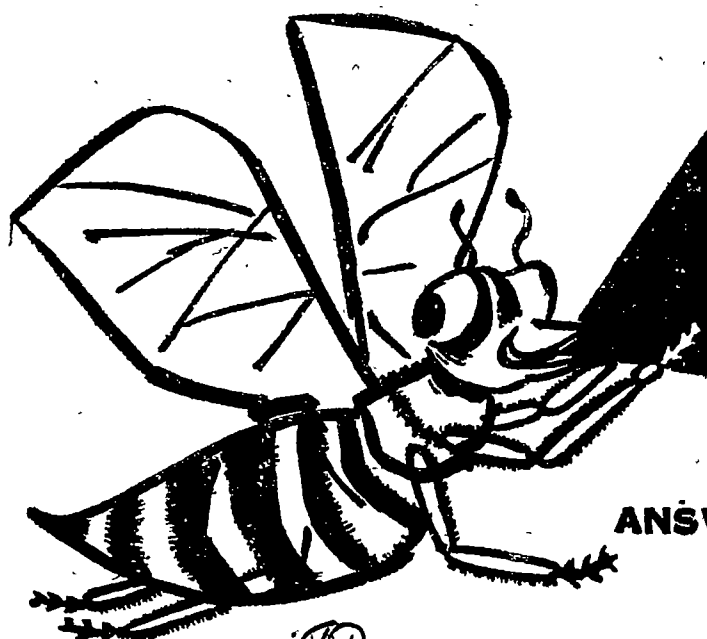


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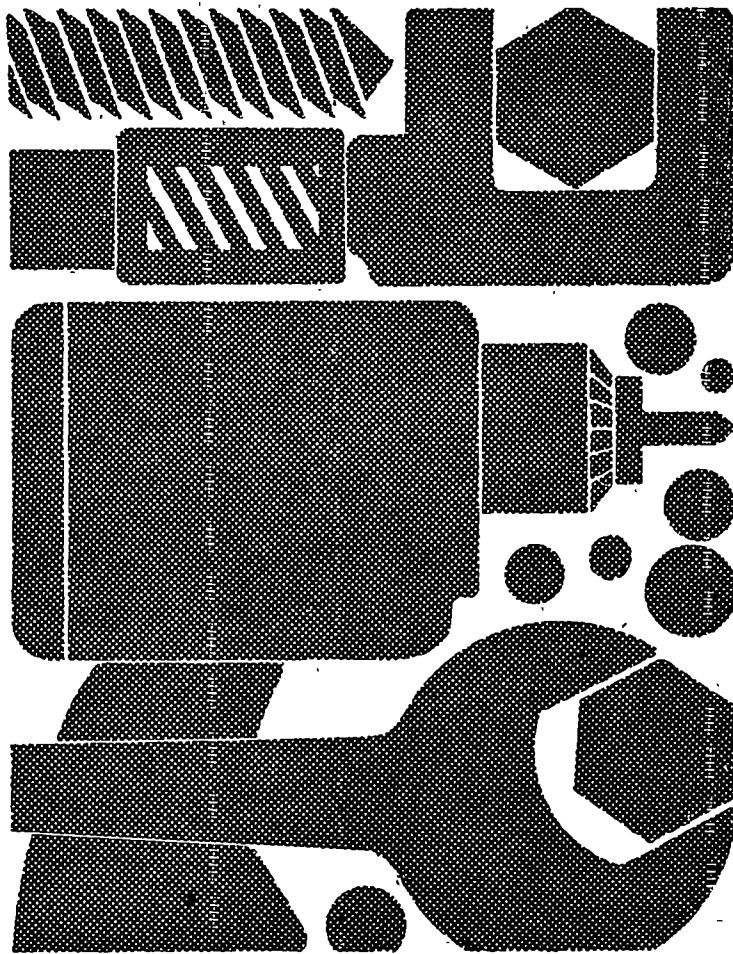
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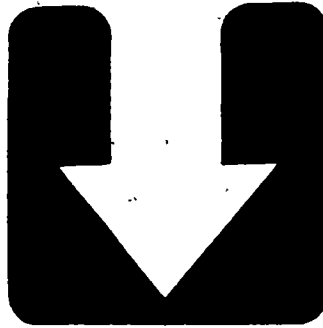
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# 123

## CONSERVATION

a symposium on the  
rational utilization of  
our natural resources

symposium participants

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### BOOKS

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### FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography  
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### COMMUNICATION

Received from Gajanan Pandey (New Delhi)

### COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury

# The problem

CONSERVATION is a new idea, just as productivity is a new idea, and has become relevant only in the last two decades. When man first came on to the planet, all that he had to do was to cut a tree, catch a fish, hunt an animal or mine a mineral. Nature was vast and men were few, and since there was limitless wealth around him the need for conservation did not cross his mind. Having descended from the apes whose responses were conditioned to food gathering from the jungle, man had to make a conscious effort to discipline himself and change his attitudes so as to live on the income and not on the capital of the land.

Tremendous damage has been done to the environment by his rapacious methods. The delicate web of nature and our natural assets have been sorely wounded, and international conferences like the one held some time ago in Paris on the scientific basis for rational use and conservation of the resources of the Biosphere are organised to discuss the best means of restoring the pristine productivity of natural processes. The Sahara was a lush forested area in the days of Imperial Rome, and the rock carvings in the temples of Mathura indicate that animals like the Rhinoceros and the Antelope which could only live in well watered forested areas were once abundant in the environs of what is now the Rajasthan desert. Overgrazing by goats and cattle and merciless exploitation by man is responsible for this unhappy transformation. But the lessons have not yet been learnt. More land continues to be denuded of trees for agriculture and other needs, and the infrastructure of nature is, as it were, instead of being sustained and improved, made weaker day by day.

has to be kept under forest cover because of its essential role in the conservation and building up of soil, for preservation of water resources, for climatic reasons and for sustaining the biotic communities of the region. The erstwhile Government of Bombay in a brochure had attempted to explain the need for forests to the public and it emphasised graphically the role of forests in improving the health of the environment. Very often a tree has as much mass below the ground as it has above ground, for the roots of many species go twenty feet deep. When these roots decay they leave openings which get filled with water during the rains, and act as a reservoir for use on a 'rainy day'. When a sharp shower of rain falls on the leaf canopy of a forest, the water falls gently to the ground and percolates through the humus and the leaf litter created by the trees, and is retained in the soil. If rain falls on bare ground the water rushes down, without seeping into the earth, and in the process washes away valuable top soil, and causes floods at lower elevations. It takes about 700 years for nature to create one inch of soil by the interaction of animal and vegetable organisms, but this valuable resource can be washed away in a brief period, once the trees are removed. The natural respiration of trees produces oxygen, a vital service for all forms of life and it helps to keep the atmosphere cool.

We have been discussing this problem for almost a century, but our actions indicate that we have not learnt the harsh lessons which nature continues to teach us. In 1877 a great famine raged in South India, and Sir Richard Temple sent to aid the Madras Government wrote: 'We cannot but reflect whether the uncertainty of season which often proves so disastrous in southern India, is not becoming worse and worse; whether there may not be some physical causes at work to render the rainfall precarious. . . Beyond the Ghat mountains

It was only in 1952 that the Government of India enunciated a national forest policy which lays down that at least 30 per cent of our land

the shrubless aspect of the country is as wonderful as it is melancholy. These are the very districts where famine is occasionally epidemic, and where scarcity has been almost endemic.'

The Indian Famine Commission reporting in 1880 said: 'There is before us a great amount of evidence from all parts of India that the destruction of forests is believed to have acted injuriously by allowing the rain waters to run off too rapidly. They descend from the hillsides in furious torrents, which carry down the soil, cause landslips, and form sandy deposits in the plains, so that the surface drainage which it gently and evenly distributed over an absorbent soil protected by vegetation, should furnish a perennial supply of fertilising springs, passes rapidly away, and the streams into which it collects quickly cease to flow, after causing mischief instead of good.'

Man in his pride, as the apex of evolution, has taken many trigger happy decisions about changing the vegetation and animal patterns of the world. Some changes have taken place accidentally because of the new lines of communication he has established. Animals and plants need not now depend for dispersal on wind and sea currents or land bridges. *Anopheles gambiae* the carrier of Malaria, for instance, can now cross the Atlantic by travelling on a liner from Northwest Africa to South America, and create havoc in an environment unused to its depredations before.

An American President made it a matter of policy to acquire exotics from all parts of the world. Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson made special efforts during their travels abroad to send home seeds and cuttings of plants for establishment in their own country, and in 1827, the President, John Quincy Adams, sent a circular to U.S. Consuls, which reveals this tendency to get the best of all worlds: 'The President is desirous of causing to be introduced into the United States all such seeds, and plants from the other countries not heretofore known in the United States, as may give promise under proper cultivation of flourishing and becoming useful. . . Forest trees useful for timber, grain of any description, fruit trees, vegetables for the table, esculent roots and, in short, plants of any nature whether useful as food for man or the domestic animals, or with purposes connected with manufactures or any of the useful arts fall within the scope of the plan proposed.'

The President's circular was well heeded, and the agricultural wealth of the United States is today based mainly on exotic— rice from South West India, wheat, rye and lentils from the Near East, soya beans from China, corn, tomatoes and

potatoes from the Andes in South America.

The dangers of exotics were really brought home by Rachel Carson, in her classic book *Silent Spring*, and she also made the world aware of the dangers of pesticides, insecticides and herbicides. This has also become a problem of international significance, and at the General Assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources held in Lucerne in 1966 a resolution read:

*'Misuse of Toxic Chemicals*

*noting with alarm the indiscriminate export and import of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides etc.) and the extreme danger to the total world environment and its inhabitants arising from their misuse.*

'The 9th General Assembly of IUCN meeting in Lucerne June 1966 recommends that firms concerned in the distribution and sale of such chemicals should take all possible steps to ensure that ultimate purchasers are suitably advised regarding their safe use in both the short and long term, invites governments concerned to study this trade and to consider suitable measures for control and for the education of the public, and offers to those Governments the services of IUCN.'

To the layman, the role of conservationists is connected principally with the preservation of birds and animals and this, of course, is an activity in which the foremost naturalists are engaged. The IUCN and the World Wild Life Fund have established tentacles in all parts of the world to ensure that any animal, bird or plant which is in danger of extinction is rehabilitated by any possible means. One of the important sections of the International Biological Programme which is now in its operative phase is concerned with the conservation of terrestrial, fresh water, and marine forms of life.

Ultimately, conservation has to deal with preserving, and wherever necessary, recreating a healthy and happy environment for the human race. The supply of pure air and unpolluted water is vital. The harvesting of fish, game, birds and animals is an important part of the protein diet of the world, and these resources have to be culled on a sustained yield basis and not exploited so severely that they are totally exhausted. This is what conservation essentially stands for.

The 10th General Assembly and the 11th Technical Meeting of the IUCN which takes place in Delhi this month (November, 1969) can play a vital part in impressing upon India the vital role of natural resources in her development plans.

# Tasks ahead

R. C. SONI

MAN—his past, his present and his future condition—cannot be divorced from his natural environment. Similarly, the true perception of man is not possible in isolation from his culture and institutions. They are part of him. The nature and meaning of man cannot be understood in separation from these social manifestations even as the nature of a goose cannot be understood in separation from its flock or that of the lion in separation from its pride. The environment is a basic natural resource determining human progress, and represents a challenging and potentially a highly rewarding field full of scope for positive activity.

Conservation means the rational use of the natural environment to

promote the culture and well-being of mankind. It deals with the broad spectrum of human concerns, such as mental and physical health, population policy, scenic amenity and environment pollution and the use of land, water, air, etc. Thus, conservation is the opportunity to use rationality, build up and distribute equitably in terms of public benefit, what we call the natural resources of the country. Such a programme must be based on a sound understanding of the natural environment by the people. Instinctively and by habit they must get identified with practising good management where its benefits are demonstrable, subjecting it to control and restraint in the use and

exploitation and ready to encourage and finance research projects in the management of natural resources.

Collectively, society should insist that any private individual or corporation claiming a right to 'own' and manage natural resources must consider them a trust held for the people and must manage them in the national interest. In our crowded world, the competing uses of natural resources and their conservation involve conflicts of interest. With an increasing population, rapid industrialisation, growing affluence, these conflicts become sharper and more frequent. If people want a continuing flow of benefit from natural resources, the proportional importance of the various uses of natural resources in terms of human welfare must be recognised. Technology and skill rather than rule of thumb and wisdom rather than prejudices and self-interest must be invoked. The capacity of man to live in creative harmony with his environment is the most crucial test to determine prosperity, now and in the future.

Our record in the management of our natural resources has been far from satisfactory. Air, water, soil, forests, grassland, wild life are our renewable natural resources capable of serving mankind in perpetuity through scientific management—replenishing what is consumed. On the contrary, with irrational exploitation and usage, unmindful of the scientific limitations, the inherent property of self-renewability suffers to the disadvantage of man.

Let us take air in the atmosphere. The sultry air of a summer's night of the room can be blown off by air-conditioners but we need winds to blow the pollution from the skies of cities. Air is also used by human beings and factories but is replenished by the photo-synthesis process of the plants. This was the simple balance in the past but over-industrialisation in many pockets of the world, causes atmospheric pollu-

tion. There are poisonous gases in the atmosphere which are harmful to mankind. The smog of Los Angeles created by unburnt gases of automobiles and the unburnt coal pieces in the atmosphere of industrial cities, are few examples of air pollution. We are still running our trains on steam and the most unhygienic place in any city is the railway station. To avoid air pollution, we need more open spaces and adequate trees and other vegetation to purify the atmosphere. We can evaluate our efforts in this direction. I would not hesitate to say that they are far from satisfactory except that in recent periods town planning has been considered an integral part of our Master Plans for development to secure this objective.

No civilisation can exist long without clean water. Water is one of the most needed of all natural resources and the supply of good clean water is becoming one of the most critical natural resource problems in urbanisation and industrialisation. Floods, drought and pollution are the highlights of the problem. How many of our rivers are clean? Why not have a look at the one nearest to Delhi. For ages it has been the source of sewage disposal and the water is generally unfit for human consumption.

The water front which may be of a lake, river or sea, is a coveted site. How many of us would like to stand and admire the muddy and polluted waters of the Yamuna? The floods create havoc every year because the water is not controlled. The whole run-off goes to the sea leaving behind famine and human misery. Unless the rain water is held back in biological dams, i.e., the forests and grasslands, and artificial dams, we will not be able to hold the water on land so that it be available where we want to sustain our civilisation.

We have made substantial progress in our irrigation systems but the problem of flood control and ground water development are

being touched still on the fringes—the least said the better about pollution of water. The vital need of focusing action on purity of water is evident from the agreements based on mutual cooperation and to the mutual advantage of sovereign nations.

For ages, the soil has been considered an inanimate object—like rocks and minerals. But pedology has now revealed that the soil is much more of a living organism which matures with time to become more useful. Vegetation can be restored in a reasonable time but if the living top soil is lost, the natural processes take 600 years to restore one inch or over 7000 years to build up one foot depth of soil to support vegetation. Unfortunately, human effort cannot hasten this process. In this sense, the soil resource tends to be exhaustible in nature. How many of us consider this when we plough our land or spade to remove soil or allow the action of water or wind to destroy this soil and harvest the crop?

The pages of history are littered with wrecks of the ships of State which have foundered because natural laws were ignored. Gobi, Mesopotamia, and other areas that were once the cradles of civilisation had their fertility reduced to dust because of human improvidence. Nearer home are examples of Mohenjodaro and others. The ravaged Shiwaliks in the North-West, extended ravine lands and exposed rocky landscapes with shallow or no soil in the Arravalies, the Vindhyas and even the very stable trap region in the South are reminders of the past misuse of soil. The memories of the Great Dust Bowl that engulfed New York and most of the U.S.A. in 1934 are still fresh in the mind. The soil conservation organisations in India and the United States and other countries is only a recent awakening. The fact remains that soil conservation is more a social problem than a technical one.

Multi-utility of forest resources is fairly well recognised in our

country. A sound and adequate forest service, backed by a good forest law and a precise forest policy, have been scientifically managing the forest resources of the country for over a century now. Extensive forest areas owned by individuals remained out of the purview of the Indian Forest Act. The process of clearance of land for cultivation and grazing through indiscriminate fellings continued in these areas. Social action became imminent and soon after independence these were acquired by the State. Today, over 95 per cent of the area is State owned. Unfortunately, this long history of dis-afforestation has left barely 24 per cent of the land area under forests in the country when the climatic and physical conditions and needs for forest produce indicate that at least 33 per cent of the total geographical area should be dedicated to forests.

In the mountainous and hilly regions, to conserve soil and water, to reduce floods and ensure a sustained flow in our rivers, a permanent vegetation cover of over at least 60 per cent of the area is vital. We are far from this goal in the majority of our catchments and particularly in the river valley projects. In recent years, extensive forest areas have been cleared for the Grow More Food Campaign or for rehabilitation purposes when the correct approach was to practise intensive agriculture. As a matter of fact, the bulk of newly cleared areas have already gone out of agriculture because the lands were in reality unsuitable for permanent cultivation. Shifting cultivation continues to be a menace in many parts of our forests.

A gap between supply and demand of wood for industrial purposes is ever-widening. The need is to double or triple the production from the existing forest areas through investments on raising plantations and the evolution of new technology through research both in growing and harvesting of

forest areas. A solution to these problems essentially needs sustained availability of finance on the one hand and a much bigger research organisation than available at present.

Over-grazing in forest areas is the rule in exercise of recorded rights. Heavy rights, often incompatible with the capacity of local forests, have resulted in wasteful usage of forest resources. Productivity further suffers due to fires, deliberately or accidental.

Apart from the grasslands included in the forest areas, about 17 per cent of our land area is classed as 'wasteland' which in reality is utilisable for the production of grass, mainly for the excessive grazing by a fantastic cattle population—almost one per head of the human population. The progressive deterioration of vegetation and the dangerously fast loss of soil are threatening to convert these useable areas into 'deserts' incapable of redemption. Age old prejudices and socio-economic forces are too powerful to enable logical action in the shape of a drastic reduction of the cattle population, despite the clear conception that the cattle are competing with man for survival. Observers are not wrong in remarking 'Reduce the cattle population to solve the food problem'.

Nature has endowed our country with a rich heritage of wild life which is as varied as our flora. The destruction of vegetation over vast stretches of land has driven our wild life to the ultimate retreat in the diminishing forests and areas of wilderness. Still, our wild life compares favourably with any other continent in the world in its marvellous variety and beauty. Some species are, however, on the brink of extinction. The utmost priority to recreate conditions for their survival is a problem. Shooting and hunting are regulated both in the forests and outside but poaching is also a menace to the conservation of wild life resources and needs to be curbed. Our knowledge of the complete ecosystems which sustain different

species of wild life is inadequate. The same applies to other natural resources, and the common man has little understanding of the value and utility of our wild life resources. The time has come for concerted efforts to educate our people that the lesser creatures have a right to exist in our environment.

Jawahar Lal Nehru, who had a genius for applying sensitivity to everything around him, very aptly said: 'But life would become very dull and colourless if we did not have these magnificent animals and birds to look at and to play with. We should, therefore, encourage as many sanctuaries as possible for the preservation of what remains of our wild life. Our forests are essential for us from many points of view. Let us preserve them. As it is, we have destroyed them far too much. It is true that as population grows, the need for greater food production becomes necessary. But this should be by more intensive cultivation and not by the destruction of the forests which play a vital part in the nation's economy.'

The 10th General Assembly and the 11th Technical Meeting of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources which takes place in Delhi this month (November, 1969) will play a vital role in focusing attention on preservation and conservation of natural resources in future development.

We must not underestimate the tasks ahead in conservation. We must set our sight on finite goals and reach them, whether these be purification of air and water, rational use of land, preservation of forests, saving of natural park or decent outdoor recreation opportunities. We must at the same time recognize that the pursuit of environmental quality cannot be separated from control of human numbers, from the fight for civil rights, from effective attacks on the problems of the culturally and economically deprived people. It is our duty to try—without trying we are surely doomed.



# Biological programme

B R. SESHACHAR

SOME years ago, a British and an Italian scientist conceived an idea of the examination and systematic analysis of the factors affecting productivity on land, in the sea and in the fresh waters on our planet. Developed as an international programme, this concept envisaged cooperation among the major countries in the world to

understand the productivity processes in nature and to harness them adequately and meaningfully to the betterment of man. This is the International Biological Programme which, after a two-year period of preparation, became functionally effective in July last year. Sixty countries are participating in this programme. India

is one of them. It is expected to last a period of 5 to 7 years during which there would be much opportunity for exchange of useful information on the biological processes responsible for productivity and their bearing on man and his environment.

**U**nder the title 'Biological Basis of Productivity and Human Welfare', this programme has wide applications. It deals with production processes in the fresh waters, on land and in the sea. It deals with man's adaptability to varying conditions of climate and his biological environment. It is concerned with the conservation of natural habitats to maintain a proper balance in nature. It envisages active cooperation among the different nations in the world so that knowledge can be shared.

Admittedly, agriculture is one of the important fields of relevance to the International Biological Programme, for increasing the productivity from the land and studying this in relation to man—the earth's most demanding and depredating inhabitant—are the most urgent and imminent tasks before man today.

The urgency and imminence have arisen out of two problems which confront us: food and population. About 10 years ago a group of scientists in the U.S.A. organized a series of symposia to determine the agricultural and technological resources on a world-scale and project these resources to the population problems. This was published under the editorship of Dr. Harrison Brown, Foreign Secretary of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, in 'The Next Hundred Years'. Everybody sat down comfortably after that and felt that they had done a good job and on the basis of these findings, expected governments, corporations and foundations to take some action on the lines suggested in their analysis.

Two years passed, five years passed; some rethinking was done and it was discovered, like several other prophecies, this one was wrong too. And, in 1967, the

group met again to see what had gone wrong with these predictions. In fact, everything had gone wrong. This was especially true of the two things mentioned earlier, food and population. Food production had not increased anywhere as fast as they had predicted and population had risen much faster than they had thought, with the result that the world is now in a very desperate situation.

During the past 10 years, rich countries have become richer, their population rates have come under control, they have adopted measures by which they have, relative to their Gross National Product (GNP), achieved a remarkable success. On the other hand the poor countries have become poorer and have had to depend on their affluent neighbours for assistance in practically every field of their endeavour. Their population projections have all proved wrong. The measures employed to check population growth have been half-hearted and ineffective and agricultural production has not kept pace with the population growth, with the result that since 1956, when India started receiving massive food aid, there has not been a single year when we can say we have been able to feed our population from our own resources. And the most disturbing thing is that our leaders proclaim with dependable repeatability and at regular fixed intervals, that we are on the way to self-sufficiency.

**I**ndia is not alone in this, however little it helps us to think so. Many other countries are in the same plight. It was estimated 10 years ago that half the world's population was continuously on the verge of starvation and another 25 per cent was seriously undernourished. The situation has not changed; actually if it has changed, it has done so for the worse. Most of Latin America, much of Africa, the Near East and Asia, except Japan and Taiwan, are seriously under-nourished. Food production in the developed countries has risen no more than in the underdeveloped; rather, it is the spectacular population rise

that is responsible for the imbalance. For example, we in India are adding every year, the entire population of the whole of Australia—something between 12 and 15 millions. In fact the whole world has added, during the past 10 years, a net total of 500 million and of this over 400 are in the hungry regions.

What of agricultural production? It was originally believed that increases in world food production would probably be at the rate of around 2 per cent per year and, in some areas, it could be as much as 4 per cent. It was felt that anything less than this would result in serious food deficits, hunger and misery. Actually, in many parts of the world, yields have been less than 1 per cent, due not so much to new technology or raising per acre yields as to an increase in acreage, often of quite marginal areas. Not only has population increased more rapidly than was anticipated, but agricultural technology has spread more slowly and much less effectively.

**T**hat this has happened is not due to our planners. In fact, our development plans included high targets: we thought we would be able to achieve a 5.4 per cent increase per annum. We allocated about 25 per cent of our development funds for agriculture during the 3 five-year plans, although some thought even this was inadequate. But we have failed. Why?

It will be remembered that our early development plans included not projects of agricultural development, like fertilizer production, but power projects, irrigation projects, which, however related to agriculture, were programmes with slow pay-offs. This was a serious lapse for which we are even now paying dearly. Even more serious, we and other developing countries did not pay enough attention to the key inputs which raised agricultural productivity spectacularly, i.e., education and training. As the F.A.O. observed with special reference to India, our failure was due to 'inadequate economic incentives to peasants, inadequate management of programmes inade-

quate extension and inadequate supply of trained personnel at all levels'.

**T**he one conclusion drawn from the experience of the last 10 years is that underdeveloped countries cannot solve their food and population problems by themselves. Nor can they solve them with the outside help they are now getting from developed countries. This help would have to be massive—3, 4 or even 10 times of what they are getting and must take the form of not just the food which they are getting now, but of the technology by which more food can be obtained from their own resources.

To give an example: it is often said that the sea is our saviour and 'Food from the Sea' should be our slogan. As an additional source of calories for our starving populations, it seems an attractive one. But it is often not realized that food from the sea accounts for only 1 per cent of the diet of the human race and ten years ago, it was even less; it was only half of 1 per cent. The plain fact is, there are just not very many fish in the sea. Fish occur largely along the coasts—the open sea is a desert. Also, fish production is an expensive and often a wasteful process. Fish do not eat plants, they eat animals; they eat animals that eat animals. At each step in the food chain, 90 per cent of the calorie input is lost. It has been estimated that it takes 100,000 pounds of plant to make one pound of codfish.

This is where the IBP comes in. For, it provides for a clearer understanding of the food productivity processes, on land, in fresh water and in the seas. It envisages studies on the better utilization of our resources in all these areas; it provides for an integrated view of food problems as against population problems, not only of man but also of other animals, especially domestic animals like cattle; it explores the possibilities of new resources and also fuller utilization of the so called waste products; it provides for a systematic analysis

of the needs of man under different conditions.

Let us choose another example. Take our millets, which include Jowar and Bajra. These two crops occupy over 42 per cent of the total area under cereals in India but the yields are dismally low, about 300 pounds per acre. It is well-known that many cereals are deficient in proteins, especially the essential amino acid, Lysine, which we are told, is responsible for the small stature of people in many underdeveloped parts of the world. Much work on finding mutant strains in several cereals with high Lysine content is going on in different parts of the world, especially in the U.S.A. Reports put out by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute at New Delhi speak of similar work there with reference to our own cereals and if these efforts succeed, it will be a major break-through on our food front.

**I**n all these fields, the need for cooperation among the biologists of the world is urgent and its usefulness undeniable. The International Biological Programme sets out to achieve this.

India is a participant in the IBP and has outlined 56 projects in her National Programme, a number of which have a distinct agricultural bias. Productivity on our land mass, with special reference to our food crops; improvement of their strains; application of adequate adaptability tests; investigation of newer sources of food, especially of protein; utilization of waste matter for conversion into edible foods; these are some of the areas of study in this country which, pursued with vigour and energy, will yield fruitful results of great significance to our increasing population.

Of course, all this needs money and it can come only from our own resources. It is hoped that our government and other funding agencies will recognize the usefulness of this undertaking and provide adequate funds.

# National parks

ZAFAR R FUTEHALLY

ALTHOUGH the first National Park was established in Yellowstone, U.S.A., almost a hundred years ago, it is only in the last twenty years that serious debates have taken place about the purpose, the management and the content of a national park. Understandably, much of this discussion has been stimulated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, a non-governmental institution, affiliated to the United Nations Organisation. It was established in 1948 as the International Union for Protection of

Nature, and the change of the name reflected the change in the thinking of ecologists and naturalists from just rigid protection to an imaginative assessment of the needs of each biotope, and the adoption of suitable policies for conservation of the flora, the fauna, and the landscape.

The First World Conference on National Parks, held at Seattle, U.S.A., in 1962 brought into focus for the first time all the problems connected with National Parks on an international plane. Of the 28 Recommendations made at the Conference the following are

particularly relevant for us in India.

Recommendation 7: 'Whereas few of the world's parks are large enough to be in fact self regulating ecological units but are more likely to be ecological islands subject to direct or indirect modification by activities and condition in the surrounding areas...research and management should be undertaken only by qualified personnel...'

Recommendation No. 11: 'Whereas national parks are important nature reserves...structures such as dams and reservoirs of hydro-electric and other purposes which would be in any way prejudicial to the purpose of a park should not be allowed in a national park, and that buildings and other tourist facilities, should wherever possible, be made available outside the parks in order to preserve their values for which the parks were established.'

Recommendation No. 22: '...for every kind of animal or plant threatened with extinction an appropriate area of natural habitat be provided in a national park... (and) any species so threatened which is not accorded such official sanctuary proclaims the failure of the Government concerned to recognise its responsibility to future generations of mankind.'

**T**aking our cue from these recommendations, let us see what we can say about the national parks of India. For the purpose of this discussion, I make no distinction between a national park and a sanctuary, although the former is supposed to be an inviolate natural area, while the latter is much more open to human interference. But from what follows it will be apparent that the designation is not the most crucial of factors so far as India is concerned. The sanctuaries and the national parks of India are all rather small in size. Even those like the Gir which have a nominal area of 500 square miles have an effective protected area of only 50 square miles. The Corbett National Park is 125 square miles; the newly constituted Borivli National Park in Maharashtra is

only 26 square miles and the Karnala Bird Sanctuary in Maharashtra is about 6 square miles. However, since in most areas of our country large contiguous undamaged forested tracts do not exist, the emphasis should be on preserving effectively whatever survives. From this angle the establishment of the Borivli Park and the Karnala Sanctuary are very commendable moves.

**B**ut what about their management by people who understand the implications of national parks, and appreciate the full significance of the aesthetic, cultural and scientific values for which they have been created. We have unfortunately no National Park Service as they have in the USA or in several countries of Africa and in Canada. The management of our national parks is in the hands of foresters and the more intelligent ones admit quite candidly that they do not know enough about ecology, wild life, and habitat control to be able to manage the environment as it should be. The more obtuse of the lot create problems by planting exotics in sanctuaries as has been done in Periyar, and allowing the type of exploitation and human interference which continues, for instance, in the Corbett National Park. A wild life management course has now been started at the Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun, and in course of time this teaching will be reflected in the attitude of foresters.

'A national park is an outdoor gallery of nature's wonders, complexities and harmonies. But unlike a museum a park is not independent of its surroundings.' Even the 5,600 square miles of the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania is not large enough to be self sufficient for the million head of ungulates which exist there and several thousands of these migrate outside the borders of the park. What happens in the adjoining areas therefore is of great importance for their survival. In Kanha, our vanishing Swamp Deer (*Cervus duvauceli*) migrate outside the park area where they are easily

killed, and in the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary in Rajasthan where water plays such an important part in the ecology of the area, it is the decision of the Irrigation and Agricultural Departments that can preserve or ruin the integrity of the habitat. Bharatpur is a good example of 'a battle ground between conservationists and developers' as the Everglades National Park is in Florida, and where too water is the crucial element of the environment.

At the 7th Session of the Indian Board for Wild Life held at New Delhi in July this year, everyone was agreed that over grazing by cattle is the greatest cause of damage to our natural areas, and that unless firm measures are taken to keep cattle out of our parks, wild life will slowly be starved to death. I think I am right in saying that all serious naturalists are of the view that over grazing by cattle is the single most important factor coming in the way of restoring our parks to their pristine condition. Salim Ali, Gee, Dharmakumarsinhji, Krishnan, Stracey, Hodd, Joslin, Schaller, Spillett all confirm this, and though cattle has so far been dealt with on the sentimental and religious plane in India, there is no hope of progress in our conservation policies if action is not now taken on scientific lines.

**I**n a memorandum submitted by the Bombay Natural History Society to the Cow Protection Committee of Parliament it was stated, 'Those who advocate schemes for banning cow slaughter on humanitarian grounds might also remember that excess cattle interfere cruelly with the natural rights of our wild animals. Even in our wild life sanctuaries, excessive cattle grazing is decimating the fauna and flora. Not only do cattle compete with wild life for food, but they introduce diseases which are often lethal to them. Every naturalist who has reported on the habitats of wild life in India has come to this conclusion. In Kanha in Madhya Pradesh, in Sariska

and Bharatpur in Rajasthan, in Kaziranga in Assam, in the Gir Forest in Gujarat State there is unbearable pressure by cattle on the environment. In some areas, as for instance in the Masinagudi and Moyar areas of the Mudumalai Sanctuary of Madras, one can see a clear difference in the health of vegetation and in the numbers of wild life between areas where there are excess cattle, and in others where their entry is restricted.

Should a welcome change take place in our attitude to cattle and if we can keep their numbers down we will soon come to a situation of the type which exists in the parks of America and Africa, where wild life has to be culled to keep numbers in consonance with the carrying capacity of the area. In the Yellowstone National Park for instance the Elk population is kept to a maximum number of 5,000, and several thousands of excess animals have to be removed from time to time.

**R**egarding our responsibility to future generations of mankind, though we have as yet lost only one mammal, the Cheetah (*Acinonyx Jubatus*) and three species of birds in recent years, several others are on the waiting list and we must act fast and intelligently if further tragedies are to be averted. The proposed biological research station in the Gir Sanctuary sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, the Yale University, the Bombay Natural History Society and the Government of Gujarat will, it is hoped, produce data on herbivore carnivore relationships, habitat requirements, inter- and intra-specific competition between species which will be available to park managers of the future as much needed guidelines.

While our declining Blackbuck are causing concern, it is heartening to learn from a report of the Texas Park and Wildlife Department that in a few counties of Texas Park and Wild Life Department raise and protect more . . . Blackbuck antelopes than are to be

found in all of India from which (the) species came'. It is said that in 1967 within the State of Texas there were 4,130 Blackbuck. Though no census of Blackbuck population in India is available, it is not unlikely that the number in Texas is higher than in India today. This shows what can be done by careful management in the breeding of a species even in places far away from its homeland, and in somewhat difficult ecological conditions.

**T**o restock our own sanctuaries with animals bred under artificial conditions in India should present no problems. Indeed, what is distressing is to see how callous and unimaginative we are in dealing with our wild life assets. Around the Sikandra monument in Agra there is a herd of Blackbuck which is doing well, but because a portion of the grounds has been reserved for agriculture—for a symbolic and futile gesture of the type we love to make—many of the animals starve to death in the summer when there is no browse and fodder for them.

That India has no separate department of Conservation is a great drawback for effective implementation of policies in this field. Now that so many new departments are being created (the latest one is of Banking) one more for conservation can be usefully set up within the Ministry of Agriculture, which should be charged with the solemn responsibility of preserving our outstanding scenic areas, examples of typical habitats, and our unique wild life in perpetuity. It is to be hoped that some moves can be initiated during the period of the next General Assembly of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources which takes place at New Delhi from November 24 to December 1, this year. The main theme of the Assembly is the environmental and economic values of the conservation of nature. It is a subject which in its long term significance can dwarf most others which come into the limelight from time to time.

# The endangered animals

HARI DANG

THE watershed from which flow most of the problems of conservation in India is the fact that wild life, and the forested areas of the country which are its commonest, though not exclusive, habitat, are State subjects under the Indian Constitution. This leads to the lack of a uniform rationale in wild life legislation, and to wide variations in the implementation of existing laws. Although the Indian Board for Wild Life has done much in recent months to advocate to the States a uniform code on the lines of the Bombay wild life legislation, the entire field of wild life conservation remains littered with 'ad hoc' anachronisms. Shooting rules and seasons, offences and penalties, and even the 'protection' afforded by law to species threatened with extinction, all display unreasonable and dangerous diversity.

Not all the animals and game-birds in danger of extinction have been given legal or *de facto* 'protection' in all the States of the Union of India, nor are those fortunate to receive such 'protection' in law either genuinely 'endangered' or effectively protected from decimation. Some of the achievements in this field of 'protection' of endangered animals may be recounted for information. The Great Indian One-horned Rhinoceros is 'protected' in Assam, Bengal and Nepal, where it occurs; the swamp deer of U.P. and Assam are, again, 'protected', as are the rarer Madhya Pradesh race, the swamp deer of Kanha, 'protected'. The *thamin* or Brow-Antlered Deer of Manipur, finds almost perfect 'protection' in Logtak Lake sanctuary near Imphal. The Asiatic Lion is 'protected' in the Gir for-

est of Saurashtra. The *hangul* or Kashmir Stag is 'protected' both in Dachigam and in Kishtwar and the Chenab valley. The black-buck in Haryana, the *chowsignha*, *thar*, musk deer, *serow* and snow leopard in U.P., and the *markhor* in Kaji Nag, and the buffalo in Madhya Pradesh, these are all 'protected' animals, but the 'protection' accorded to them is still primarily on paper. The populations of most animals are declining, those of the *hangul*, *serow*, snow leopard, musk deer, Kanha swamp deer and of the buffalo causing anxiety. The pea-fowl, which enjoyed a cultural-religious protection far more effective than anything that our laws can enforce to-day, has been given legal 'protection' also in consequence of becoming India's National Bird, and yet it, perhaps, needs such protection less urgently than, say, the Great Indian Bustard, the Grey Jungle-Fowl or the Tragopan pheasants.

All this highlights the need for rational and scientific legislation on an India-wide, if not wider, basis, and effective India-wide implementation. Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Pakistan, China, Afghanistan and Burma, have similar problems, and a regional approach if politically feasible would help save the endangered Sikkim stag, the Golden Takin, the Giant Panda and so on.

The scientific approach to the study and conservation of threatened species of plant and animal, bird and fish-life, has already been pioneered and adopted by the Survival Service Commission of the I.U.C.N., and though their list of threatened species for India is

nowhere near adequate, nor a reflection of the realities of our problems, having been based on the narrow outlooks of a few 'foreign' experts who studied the problem rather superficially, it will serve as an introduction. The I.U.C.N. compiles and maintains loose-leaf volumes for mammals, birds and so on, called the Red Data Books, with a page allotted to each species. This remarkable intelligence document is kept up-to-date with information on the status of each species, and has lately been summarised in readable form in a book entitled *The Red Book*. The year 1600 A.D. is taken as the standard, as till then extinction had progressed more at geological than at historical pace, the average expectancy of a bird species being two million years, and of an animal species only 600,000 years anyway. Now, however, 64 species of animals and 164 species of birds have become extinct since 1600, and 223 animals and 287 birds are in such grave danger as to find a place in the Red ('for danger') Data Books of the I.U.C.N.

The Indian component of recently extinct birds and animals is substantial, even though a sub-continent is not as vulnerable as an insular habitat to such disappearance. We have lost the hunting leopard or 'cheetah' since three were last shot in 1948, south of Rewa, and the pygmy-hog of the Himalayan foothills, and the Sikim Stag of the Bhutan and NEFA borders are thought by many to have become extinct also. Amongst birds, the Pink-Headed Duck and the Mountain Quail and Jerdon's Two-Barred Courser have disappeared in the last century or later.

As against this short black list of extinction, even the *Red Data Book* lists no less than 17 animal species which are rare or endangered within the Indian zoo-geographical realm and its Palaearctic fringes. This 'red' list is far from complete, but before considering each of the animals individually, it might be useful to take account of the five factors responsible in varying degree for the decimation,

rarity and imminent extinction of these.

The original, biological or 'natural' causes of extinction have been with the earth throughout the evolutionary history of life. Natural geological disasters, climatic changes like the Pleistocene glacial oscillations, working upon poor adaptors and biological overspecialisation, eliminated species every half to two million years in the 'normal' course of things. But the gathering, accelerating momentum of extinction of life since 1600 cannot be explained thus. For this, there are four specifically 'human' causes!

Hunting pressure on particular species, whether for protein-rich foods, furs, sport, fashion status, or scientific collection, or for destruction of 'vermin', has been the most potent of factors resulting from human agency. In this class are the classic examples of the modern 'over-kill', whether it be song-birds through indiscriminate use of insecticide and pesticide, or whales, sea-otters, seals and the antelopes like the Bontebok and the Hartebeest of Africa, to mention a few examples only. The extinction of the Great Auks of Newfoundland, and the flightless Dodos and Solitaires of the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Reunion, are all too recent examples of the continuing human lust for the over-kill for us to consider this merely an uncivilised stage; the over-kill is on to-day over vast areas of Australia, Asia and Africa, and is the most obvious cause of decimation and the threat to wild life.

The factor of decimation only slightly less significant than the 'Great Extinction', is the destruction of the environment in which animal species thrive. Disruption of the plant associations, through deforestation, irrigation, drainage of swampland, road-construction, farming or any other human agency, is almost as effective as actual killing. The idea is summed up in the cliché, 'Take care of the habitat, and the animals will take care of themselves.' The hue-and-cry in Indian conservation

circles reflects ignorance of this prime factor, for the tiger in India is declining because its habitat is being eroded by excessive disturbance and felling and grazing, which prevent breeding. Just like the rhinoceros and the Orang Utan in Monsoon Asia; the Indris and the Aye-Aye in Malagasy, the swamp deer and the tiger in India, the Mouflon in Cyprus and the Tapir in Central America, are all being threatened with extinction today because of the changes, generally for the worse, which man has brought about in their habitat conditions through his penchant for thoughtless development and deforestation.

Introduced predators in some of the newly settled areas of the world have also wrought havoc on indigenous prey populations, as in Australia, where the Dingo was imported to control the rabbits, and instead, or in addition, decimated the marsupials. Similar unconsidered, exotic transplantations in the West Indies and New Zealand, have proved disastrous. A similar factor to the above is the introduction of exotic fauna which come to rival the native animals in the competition for food, forage and habitat and shelter, or even destroy the native habitats, as the sheep have done on the Galpagos islands, and in Hawaii.

The causes of extinction in the past, since 1600, have been only one quarter 'natural' and three-quarters 'human'; whereas, contemporarily, one-seventh of to-day's endangered animals suffer from natural or biological hazards, and fully six-seventh are victim of some 'human' agency and interference, as outlined and explained above. Before embarking upon general comments on this state of affairs, it might be useful to specify the endangered animals of India, and the present status of each to-day.

The Great Indian One-Horned Rhinoceros is the largest of the Asiatic rhinoceroses. Fully fourteen feet from nose to tail, and six feet four inches high at the



shoulder, with a horn often 24 inches long and dark, antideluvian folds of thick skin all over as armour plating, this ungainly beast used to roam in abundance as far west as the Indus in historical times, and was hunted by the Moghuls in the valley of Dehra Dun even after 1600. Today it is restricted to eight sanctuaries in India, and the area of the Rapti valley in the Nepal foothills.

In 1959, the population of rhinoceros was estimated to be 700, of which 400 were in the Indian areas. In 1961, this number was reduced to 600! To-day, the break-up of the estimated population is as under:

Chitawan Dun in Rapti Valley Nepal:	165
Jaldapara Sanctuary, Bengal:	50
Gorumara Sanctuary, Bengal:	5
Kaziranga Sanctuary, Assam:	400
Laokhowa Sanctuary, Assam:	40
Manas, Assam:	15
Kukurata, Assam:	7
Raja Mayang, Assam:	6
Orang, Assam:	12
Sonairupa, Assam:	5
Elsewhere in Assam:	35
Grand Total of rhino in India and Nepal:	740

The rhinoceros breeds slowly. Cow rhinos calve only once in four years, and then suckle their young for two years. The gestation period is sixteen months. When poaching becomes rampant, as it had at the turn of the century and now recently again, improved weapons encouraging the hunt for the rhino-horn, and when the habitat is destroyed, disturbed or otherwise restricted by human deforestation, swamp-drainage or farming and grazing, then the rhinoceros population cannot keep up with the reduction in numbers. The single rhino horn fetches many thousands of rupees because of its rumoured, though not real, aphrodisiac properties. The swampy grasslands have everywhere been drained, and ploughed; vegetation, once moist and lush in the rhinoceros habitat, has become sparse and seasonal; the continued survival of this rhinoceros has been

one of the success stories of modern Indian conservation, even Nepal joining in to protect this species. Similar timely action could have saved the cheetah and the Pink Headed Duck, the Mountain Quail and the Sikkim Stag, now thought to be extinct.

The Asiatic Lion, *Felis leo persica*, also called the Indian or Gir Lion, is the majestic King of the Thorn Forest and of legend and anthropomorphic fable. This mythological 'babbar sher' of Hindustan, is now reduced to 162 animals confined to the Gir Forest in the Kathiawar peninsula, according to a 'census' conducted in 1968. 'Census' is the wrong word, as no visual count in known areas is possible under the wild conditions of an open forest. The estimate may be inaccurate by a fairly wide margin. Although well-protected in its sanctuary, under a genuinely conscientious forest department, all is not well with this rare and endangered species now declared the National Animal of India. Its numbers have been declining alarmingly for some years, and the attempt to transplant it to other areas of the country, tried in the Chandraprabha Sanctuary near Benaras, has not so far succeeded. The cattle-herders or 'maldharies' whose stock these lions prey upon in the Gir take a heavy toll by poisoning of carcasses, and almost a hundred lions each year might be considered killed thus, otherwise their numbers would rise. The 'lion show' of the Gir is a tourist attraction, and hunting is banned, poaching negligible, though only a 100 years ago a British subaltern is reported to have shot 26 lions on the Delhi ridge in a week. The Bombay Natural History Society, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution and others, have started a Biological Research Station in the Gir, for research work on the ecology of the lion, of which much might be hoped, financed as they are by PL 480 funds.

The four species of deer which have felt the destruction of habitat, hunting pressure through im-

proved rifles and unscrupulous disregard of lax rules, since independence came to India and even earlier, are the Kashmir Stag and the Sikkim Stag, the Swamp Deer and the Brow-Antlered Deer of Manipur.

The Kashmir Stag and the Sikkim Stag at the two ends of the Himalayan chain, as it were, are equally the victims of accurate rifles and lax administration in the recent past. The Kashmir Stag, called *hangul*, is likely to survive because of the energetic steps being taken by the Kashmir forest department, in effectivising the Dachigam sanctuary above Harwan near Srinagar. An inhabitant of the high-level coniferous forests just below the permanent snow-line and the alpine pasture lands of the Himalayas, the *hangul* used to be the abundant quarry of British sportsmen on summer vacation. Once found in a belt all the way eastwards through Chamba, Pangi, Kugti, Kishtwar, and the Chenab tributaries, it is now restricted to Dachigam and the north bank tributaries of the middle-Chenab. Gee estimated that only about 250 survived in 1961, and the figure estimated by Dr. George Schaller is 150. The present writer would put the number somewhat higher, because of the herds in the middle-Chenab, but the position is grim any way.

The *shou* has been pronounced extinct by the late E. P. Gee, on the basis of second-hand information, but it seems fairer to hold our judgement till conclusive evidence is available. The writer has personally come across antlers of this fine stag, an inhabitant of terrain very similar to the habitat of the *hangul*, in parts of NEFA and Bhutan, and has heard many stories of the shooting of this rarest of threatened animals by the troops of both sides poised on the Himalayan borders, especially in the Chumbi valley by the Chinese.

As recently as 1930, some army officers of my acquaintance shot

Sikkim Stag for 'sport' and its 'extinction', however inevitable in the future, must be held in abeyance.

The swamp deer or the proverbial *barasingha* of India, also called *gond*, is still not 'rare' in parts of Uttar Pradesh and Assam, thanks to active protection, but there is grave danger to the Madhya Pradesh, or sub-caste, *Cervus duvauceli branderii*, whereas the *gond* found in U.P. along the Nepal *terai* and in Assam is likely to survive and even increase in numbers if the present protection continues. The M.P. race confined to Kanha Sanctuary has short, compact, hard hoofs adapted for living on the hard ground, whereas the U.P. and Assam *barasingha* or *gond* which live in the marshy and swampy 'kanslands' of the *terai* in areas like Ghola, Pallia, Jharital, Kehri etc. have long, splayed hoofs, and longer legs suited to their habitat. The numbers of the Kanha *gond* have been declining recently, and the noted peninsular naturalist, M. Krishnan, considers that the 'branderii' are not breeding well because they have lost their 'virility' or 'elan vital'. Poaching, too, is not absent from the Kanha scene, and complete protection is essential to save this species. Kr. Arjan Singh, The late E. P. Gee, and Dr. Schaller's estimates of the populations are between 3,000 to 4,000, with 400 of these being in Kanha, a number recently reported down to 200 or fewer animals.

**T**he Manipur Brown Antlered Deer or *thamin*, lives on the yielding morass and swampy floating vegetation of the Logtak lake in Manipur near Imphal. It walks on its entire pastern of the hoof, and its hooves are specially adapted to such terrain called 'phumdi' in Manipur. Strangely enough, the forest department declared this animal extinct in 1951, but it was rediscovered and is now estimated at nearly 100 animals in Logtak, which has been declared a 'sanctuary'. Only ten square miles of this lake area, called Keibul

Lamjao, is a sanctuary, and this needs to be extended and developed, and protection better enforced. The *thamin* has survived mainly because of the 'phumdi', which is impossible for boats as well as humans and the people of the nearby villages are vegetarian in diet.

**T**he Asiatic or Indian buffalo, or 'jungli bhainsa', *Bubulus bubalis*, as distinct from the bison or 'gaur' is another species endangered, to which protection has been accorded by M.P., though not, as far as I can ascertain, in Assam, where some American sportsmen guided by an Indian *shikar* company, shot three last year. The Asiatic buffalo is now found only along three regions. The first is the Brahmaputra valley in Assam, where about 2000 are known in the Kaziranga, Manas sanctuaries, and along the riverain forests of the river flood-plain. Then, the borderlands between Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra, along the lower reaches of the Godavari river, where 150 or more occur. The third region is the Nepal *terai* along the Sapt Kosi rivers where a score or so survive still. The wild buffalo has declined in numbers because its habitat, the vast grasslands and undisturbed forests, have been cut down and ploughed, and better weapons in the hands of villagers have led to increased hunting pressure. It has been given legal protection for a long time, but such paper-protection has not been effective in the field.

The Indian Bison or *gaur*, *Bos gaurus*, the Nilgiri Thar, are also both endangered, but not yet fully protected, and are being shot all over wherever they occur in their rather limited habitats, sometimes with permits, generally by local residents and villagers without this formality. It won't be long before these too are endangered.

The Nilgiri Thar *Hemitragus hylocrius*, is down to 400 animals in the Annamalais and the Western Ghats southwards, and is currently being studied by Dr. George

Schaller and E.R.C. Davidar, being included in the *Red Data Book* of the I.U.C.N.

The Malabar Civet, *Viverra Megaspila civettina*, is a cat confined to the coastal districts and the Western Ghats of southern India, and is nearing extinction. The Asiatic *cheetah*, if it still survives, may be in a few pairs in the tangled jungle-clad hills of Rewa southwards, in H.P. but it seems highly unlikely.

The Indian Wild Ass, *Equus hemionus khur*, and its Himalayan cousin, the Tibetan Wild Ass, *Equus hemionus kiang*, are both endangered, but both appear to survive in the hundreds, the first 800 in the Ranns of Kutch, and the latter possibly more numerous in the Ladakh plains and neighbouring plateau areas. No estimate of the *kiangis* is, of course, available.

The Wild Yak, *Bos grunniens*, is confined to North and North-East Tibet, and has been given protection by the Chinese authorities, but appears to be in some danger. Similarly, the symbol of the World Wildlife Fund, the Giant Panda, *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*, the six-foot-long bamboo bear, is confined to a longitudinal distribution of 175 miles, between Yehli, where Theodore Roosevelt of the USA shot his trophy, to Wen Chuan, all in the Min river area of western Szechwan and eastern Sikang. It is not considered endangered as the Chinese are rather proud of this, and have bred it successfully in captivity, but in the wild state it is declining.

**T**he snow leopard of the Himalayas and associated mountain ranges may not be in immediate danger of extinction, because of its wide range, but it is becoming rarer in the Himalayan range with which the writer has been familiar over the last eighteen years. A ghost-like predator of the snows near the timberline, this magnificent animal may last another ten years, if the trade in its lush pelt is not stopped.

The two *takins*, the Golden Takin and the Szechwan Takin, are both

endangered, as these ungainly beasts easily fall prey to the villager with the rusty matchlock or even the poisoned dart. There are fair herds in the Laya-Lingshi region of Bhutan, and in the Luhit valley in India of the Golden Takin, and the Szechwan Takin is confined to Chinese territory.

The Red Goral is another hill-animal endangered. It is found only in the Mishmi hills in India, and in North-West Burma, and its numbers have declined alarmingly.

The Pygmy Hog (*Sus salvanius*) is called 'nul gohari' in Assam, where it occurs along the foothills in the Darrang district and has been reported from Goalpara also. It is a rare race of the family of Suidae or pigs, not more than a foot in height and two feet in length. It is still being trapped by tea garden labourers in these two Assam districts, but it has not been seen by anyone qualified to report on it with certainty for fifteen years. Its shooting is, it seems, not yet prohibited by law.

The wild buffalo has declined in numbers because its habitat, the vast grasslands and undisturbed forests have been reduced, and better weapons in the hands of villagers have led to increased hunting and poaching pressure. It has been 'protected' legally for a long time, but such protection is not effective in the field.

The family of antelopes, of which four used to occur in vast numbers in the open plains of India and their neighbouring forest habitats, are all in danger. The blackbuck, or 'kala hiran', of the great plains, the wide open fields and riverain 'khadar' forests, is now reduced to a mere few thousand, when only twenty years ago, I myself have seen herds which numbered thousands, covering vast areas in Punjab, what is now Haryana, Rajasthan and Saurashtra, not to mention herds in U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere. The blackbuck has been protected in some States; but not in all, and it will not be long before this most characteristic of

India's fauna disappears altogether.

The Four-Horned Antelope, or *chowsingha*, occurs in the fringe forests of U.P., and I have seen pairs in Western U.P. myself. There may be a hundred or two surviving, but unless the paper-protection afforded them in some States, is rendered effective, they will die out. In Madhya Pradesh, where they were once abundant, they are still found, but rarely now. A small animal, like the gazelle or *chinkara*, the *chowsingha* has four horns, in pairs, seldom more than a few inches.

The *chinkara*, or Indian Gazelle, (*Gazella gazella bennetti*), is the roving refugee of the deserts and sand-dunes of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Saurashtra, also found in some numbers in Madhya Pradesh, where they seem to thrive equally on the rocky hills. Locally known as *kalpunchhi* because of their black tails, they sport ribbed, curved horns in the male, and smooth spikes in the females, the former nearly fourteen inches at times, and the latter nearer six inches. Their numbers, too have declined greatly, and they are still being shot.

The fourth antelope, the redoubtable *nilghai* or blue bull (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) is still widely mistaken for a member of the cow family, which it is NOT, being a true antelope. It used to occur in vast herds all along the khadars of the great rivers of the plains, but the diplomatic corps from New Delhi have been largely responsible for their virtual extinction from these areas. They still occur widely in the forests of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, U.P. and other States. They, too, should be given a measure of protection and their shooting restricted to non-breeding seasons and to reasonable numbers per year.

The last great family of wild life is the Himalayan or palaearctic mammals, found in the ultimate mountain ranges of the world, the Himalayas. Though most of these are threatened by the same factors

which threaten Indian wild life generally, there is the added danger from the movement of armed troops, who levy a heavy toll of their temperate breeding populations. Of the really endangered species in this group are the markhor, found in Kaji Nag in Kashmir, the musk deer, found all over but increasing endangered by the hunting for the musk-pod by local villagers, and the Takin, Serow and Gorals, or the goat antelopes. Also threatened are the snow leopard for its fine fur, the Thar, Ibex, bharal and Ovis ammon argali and nyan for their meat and the Red Panda, the red bear and the black bear. All these animals are in grave danger, but legal 'protection' has been given only to musk deer. Even musk deer, or 'kasturi mriga', are not allowed to be shot, but the export of musk or 'kasturi', obtained from the musk gland of the animal, is freely exported to Germany, France, USA and Japan. This virtually encourages the poaching of this 'protected' species, and the governments of various States are now thinking of establishing breeding farms for musk deer. Before this can be done, their should be research conducted into the ecology of the musk deer.

This lengthy catalogue of mammals threatened with extinction in India may read like a dull account of disease, but bulletins of disaster can carry excitement only to those who feel themselves influenced by the outcome of the movement to succour the patient. The patient in this case is the country of India, the body politic of which has merely transmitted its disease of neglect and indifference to its natural heritage for too long. It is not the obituary of these seventeen or seventy species of animals which we will read if we do not pay heed to the problems of conservation of natural resources, but the obituary of the entire nation and its wealth and prosperity.

The time for action is now, when the list of patients is still optimistically redeemable, not beyond redemption. Tomorrow will be too late.

# Soil and water

R. V. TAMHANE

OF all the gifts of nature, none is more indispensable to man than soil. Man has always been dependent upon land for food, even during the prehistoric hunting time, but soil erosion is the most serious and prevalent disease of land for all time. Vast areas have been so damaged that they no longer can be used to grow anything of value to human beings. Ravines of the Chambal, the Mahi

and the Jamuna in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and U.P. are the standing examples of what age long erosion has done to once productive land. Soil erosion—natural or geological erosion—is a continuous process and will go on into the future regardless of anything man may do, but the soil erosion which we are so seriously concerned with is an abnormal and undesirable process started by

man's activities and misuse even as it is subjected to man's control, if he wisely were to follow the dictum of nature. Unchecked erosion produces poverty and undermines the strength of the nation. Land must be conserved at all cost. To accomplish this we must work hand in hand with nature and use a strategy based on knowledge of the natural process rather than waste our efforts on needless procedures.

It has become clear enough that soil erosion is one of the world's most pressing problems of today. Already it has ruined millions of acres of formerly cultivable land and reduced other millions to a definitely sub-marginal condition. As matters stand, we no longer have much good land left. Already, nearly 47.0 per cent of our land is under cultivation and only 20.0 per cent is under forest. No other country in the world today has such a high proportion of land under cultivation and yet the others are able to produce much higher yields than ours.

In addition to these limitations, we have a number of other problems, created because proper soil and water conservation measures were neglected in the early days. These include man-made problematic lands of saline, alkali and waterlogged areas. An excessive rate of siltation in the reservoirs of our dams constructed at enormous cost is reducing the very life of these dams and the frequent occurrence of flood hazards which are sapping the capital foundation—the land—on which productive agriculture is inherently dependent, is causing great concern. A rough estimate indicates that nearly 140 million hectares (360 million acres) are suffering from soil erosion, which is more than one-third of the country's land resources and this danger is continuously increasing.

India is a vast country with basic natural resources of soil, water, climate and labour for abundant food production but by unchecked erosion and the constant use of our land, our soils are aging naturally with the result that the

fertility of our soils is now at the lowest level in the world. If such a deterioration is not checked through soil conservation measures, then other inputs for increasing the crop production will be infructuous.

Soil erosion is taking a heavy toll of the fertility of our lands. It is computed that the soil loss through erosion from our arable land excluding paddy fields is of the order of 6000 million tons per year. This loss of soils carries every year nearly 2.5 million tons of nitrogen which is a most essential ingredient of soil fertility. Besides the loss of nutrients through erosion, India's lands are affected by many associated problems. Excess of water during monsoon rains and through the canal system of irrigation frequently handicaps much of India's agriculture. It creates a major problem of surface drainage and contributes to water logging and development of saline and alkali lands. Nearly 48 lakh hectares today suffer from these problems of salt development and sub-soil water raising. There are places in India where lakhs of hectares could be improved and made productive by surface drainage alone at much less cost and in less time. Many such areas are known to be very productive and yet they produce low yields due to these annual calamities. In the Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and other places where canal irrigation is prevalent, the rise of sub-soil water has affected nearly 5.0 million hectares of good agricultural land.

The ill-effects of flooding and deposition of infertile debris and sediment through the seasonal torrents or what is locally known as Chos on valley land is another equally important problem affecting the agricultural lands in North India. The problem of ravines on the banks of our rivers, especially the Yamuna, the Chambal, the Mahi, the Sabarmati and their tributaries are causing much concern to us. Large areas of good agricultural land in the U.P.,

Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat have been badly eroded and transformed into ravines. About 2.4 million hectares are badly hit by ravines in the whole country. These gullies and ravines are spreading every year into good neighbouring cultivable land, thereby making it useless for agriculture. It also affects the economic life of the people living in these regions.

Besides the problems of agricultural production in crop lands, excessive grazing and over-felling of trees have accentuated the formation of desert-like conditions in the dry regions with the result that drought conditions occur more frequently than before, while in hilly regions the denudation of rich forest wealth has brought down the total forest area to only 20 to 22 per cent, although our national policy is to keep nearly 33 per cent of the land under forest. Accelerated erosion in hilly areas devastating the forest wealth causes rapid filling of stream channels and reservoirs and reduction in the life of dams constructed at enormous cost. Floods too cause large losses to our agricultural lands. Each year India suffers damage to the extent of nearly Rs. 1000 crores due to floods.

An analysis of the Indian farm problem shows that the best in Indian agriculture is comparable to the best in other countries. But the average level is unduly low. It is this level that has to be raised.

India is blessed with one of the largest water supplies of any country in the world with tropical and sub-tropical climate and a potential to grow crops on a year round basis and yet we find ourselves ranking miserably low in production. Irrigation in India has for many years been looked upon as insurance against famine. In the execution of the irrigation schemes, extensive application (for revenue earnings) rather than permanent productivity has more often been the guiding principle. Because drainage works were not revenue earning enterprises, they

were looked upon as a luxury in water-deficient areas and thus they were completely neglected.

**T**he result of inadequate water application has been the development of saline and alkali soils. Much of India's irrigated lands are being damaged by deposition of salts carried by the movement of water within the soil mass near the root zone. The reason is that irrigation water from the canal system is available only at fixed intervals of eight to ten days during the running season of the canal system and not adjusted according to the crop requirements, while in other seasons water is either not available or given to other lands. Water is applied to all kinds of soils without any consideration to the soil properties that are likely to be affected under irrigation and without giving due consideration to the irrigation requirements of the crops. This approach has led to the salinity and waterlogging in many areas of canal command and which in turn has reduced the agricultural lands to less productive or totally unfit for further cultivation.

In addition, it produces only one-fourth or one-fifth additional ton increase in crop yield on irrigated lands as compared to non-irrigated lands. Such an increase through irrigation alone is considered to be very low. Moreover, only about 12 to 15 per cent of irrigated land is used for growing more than one irrigated crop per year. The attitude regarding irrigation as insurance against famine has got to be changed and we must get away from this idea of subsistence agriculture where irrigation is available. Increased production to be worthwhile under irrigation must be based upon sound soil and water management practices designed to produce two crops in areas where one crop is the rule.

Cattle play an indispensable role in any programme for increasing food production. No doubt they will provide the power for farm operations and for transporting agricultural products to the market. But the problem of the cattle

population and of its support is alarming. India's bovine population is estimated to be 360 million, nearly one-fifth of the world's entire population. For the country as a whole, the density of the cattle population alone works out to 116 per 100 hectares, that is about 1.8 cattle per acre or 40 cattle per 100 persons. The production of food products from our cattle wealth is also very low.

One head of cattle requires 3 acres of good grazing land, or about 5 to 8 acres of inferior land. India has nearly 360 million cattle with only 136 million hectares under cultivation and only 60 million hectares of uncultivated land. Assuming that 50 per cent of the cattle is fed on agricultural land, it would require an additional area of roughly 136 million hectares of good grass land at the rate of 3 acres per head of cattle, while it would need nearly 226 million hectares of inferior grass land at the rate of 5 acres per head of cattle. Thus, there is very great pressure on our land resources. Moreover, good grazing land is not available in India at present. The problem has, therefore, become one of minimising the competition between people and animals for products of the same land. Uncontrolled grazing has deprived the hilly and forest areas of good nutritive grass. It has been estimated that at least one-third or perhaps as much as one half of India's cattle population may be regarded as surplus in relation to the feed supply. There is great need of a positive programme to bring down the number of cattle and gear up the supplies of food and fodder.

**T**he soil conservation programme in the country was initiated with the commencement of the five-year plans. In the initial stages it had the limited objective of controlling erosion in the widely dispersed cultivated areas by contour bunding, bench terracing and gully plugging in affected areas. Maharashtra State was the pioneer in this programme and during the first plan period nearly 2.84 lakh hectares were covered

all over the country under this programme. In the second plan period another 1.00 million hectares of agricultural land were treated with contour bunding and terracing, while in the third plan period nearly 4.00 million hectares were covered with such a programme. Until the third plan period the main emphasis of the soil and water conservation programme was on contour bunding and terracing in agricultural lands for individual owners and afforestation and pasture development in other lands. In its narrow sense, soil conservation means control of erosion but when it is to be applied for increase in crop production, the broader meaning which takes into account proper land use, protecting land against all forms of soil deteriorations, rebuilding the lost fertility of land, conserving moisture for crop use in arid and semi-arid regions, proper and efficient use of water, providing surface and sub-soil drainage in badly drained areas and other management practices to get the maximum benefit of inputs for increasing the yield per acre on a sustained basis should be adopted.

**I**n short, the reoriented approach of soil and water conservation requires the application of all the necessary practices to maintain the capability of the land for which it is best suited and to improve the productivity of agricultural land. Conservation of soil and the efficient use of water and proper utilisation of land for the purpose for which it is best suited and its successful management are the real meaning of soil and water conservation. Today, the emphasis in conservation is not so much on run-off and erosion control as on the whole soil, water and crop management programme on a watershed basis. This is a much more realistic approach, since accelerated run-off and erosion of agricultural land are the result of the way the soil is managed. In no situation does the adage which states that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure apply better than in the field of soil and water conservation.

# Tourism

K. S. SANKHALA

THE movement of man is as old as human history. People travelled in search of new pastures and new lands for trade. At times they organised themselves to conquer land and take people as prisoners and slaves. Mass movements were always associated with human misery. Even during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, visitors to Africa and India, in pursuit of their leisure, were also a resource of natural waste. They were interested in killing hundreds and injuring thousands of animals who died in misery. Leisure was within the reach of only a few wealthy people. Travel was expensive and required greater preparations years in advance. It was also boring and uncomfortable with the result that such safaries were planned and undertaken only once in a lifetime.

Most of the recent international movement was during 1914-18 and 1939-45. This too left nothing but blood stains, battle scars, graves and human misery. Never in the history of mankind has a mass movement of people from one continent to the other taken place for peaceful purposes as during the last ten years. This movement is of a different man—an international tourist who is a combination of an explorer, wanderer, pilgrim, casual traveller, who leaves home in search of new things, unique places, varied experiences, exotic pleasure, fun and mental comfort. Exotic woodlands, beautiful land-

scapes, snow covered mountains, fragrant flowers, rare singing birds, elephant herds uprooting trees and young calves mischievously pulling each other's tails, a tigress with her young leisurely walking along the road, roaring lions, herds of deer and antelopes and curious creatures like the giraffe, zebra, kangaroo, etc., are all what a tourist wants. He feels happy to be in the company of nature which provides him revealing and comforting experience. Conservation of Nature is, therefore, a pre-requisite of the tourist industry of a country.

Conservation has been defined as an opportunity to use rationally, build up and distribute equitably in terms of public benefit, what we call the natural resources of the country. The rational use of natural resources will seek to avoid wastage, a good definition of which is needless destruction or loss without equivalent gain. Waste can occur both in production and in conservation. Absolute waste is destruction without return and the best example of such waste is a forest fire. Similarly, relative waste is that which is consumed out of proportion to gain and, finally, the organised waste is created by artificial scarcity, by destroying resource to maintain space or price. Every industry uses raw material for producing a saleable commodity. The raw material is consumed. But in the case of the tourist industry, it

involves no consumption of raw material or any natural resources and, hence, there is no waste. Conservation of the natural areas is a saleable produce in the case of tourism. It is, therefore, rightly called the industry without smoke.

**T**he best example of what conservation of nature means to tourism is of the North-American national parks. The Yellow Stone National Park receives as many as 25,000 people a day in the month of July and over a million people visit the park every year, in spite of the fact that the park remains closed during winter. The others like the Grand Canyon National Park—a spectacle of geological history, attracts another million people every year. Similarly, Grand Teton, the Rocky mountains, Yosemite, and the Glacier National Parks are areas of mountain glory well conserved.

The lands totally hostile to civilisation hitherto known as desert are now the Death Valley National Monument, the Great Sand dune, the white sands, and the Big Bend National Monuments which are considered the holiday resorts of winter. The impenetrable evergreen fresh water swamps were nothing but waste lands of no use. They now form the most popular National Parks. The Everglades National Park of Florida is a land and water ecological gem. People visit the park to enjoy the bubbling organic life of the Everglades and last but not the least, are the sea-shores. Selected natural areas have been constituted as national sea-shores for the enjoyment of people. Millions and millions of people visit the park to spend their leisure hours for mental comfort. A visit to a National Park has become a status symbol in American society.

Credit goes to President Theodore Roosevelt who termed 'economy of natural resources' as the conservation of natural resources. He organised (for the first time in history), a 50-men National Conservation Commission composed of scientists, businessmen and statesmen to report on the national inventory of the natural resources of the country in 1908. This was

the beginning of the present conservation movement. He had even planned to call a world conference on conservation. By the constant efforts of dedicated men, conservation has become the pre-requisite to the survival of mankind. As a result of this movement, National Parks have been constituted.

The other dimension of conservation tourism is demonstrated by the wild life of African parks. The elephants, lions, hunting cheetah, giraffes, wild buffalo, rhinoceros and herds of impala and gazelle of the Tsavo and Serengeti National Parks of East Africa provide excellent holidays to nearly over a million people every year. They come from all over the world. These are international tourists visiting the parks only to enjoy the wild animals and the exotic pleasure of vast stretches of land, open skies and primitive nature in its purest form. Some 20 years ago, the Ngorongoro Game Reserve received only a few hunting parties in a year. Now it receives a few hundred visitors every day and almost all the year round.

**W**hat does this mean to East Africans—a smokeless industry second to only coffee which has hardly any capital investment except conservation of their wilderness areas. To them conservation means foreign exchange without export.

To us conservation is even more important for our survival. The problems of our limited natural resources and over population can only be solved by it. For our tourist development, conservation is the only hope.

The pre-historic Indian rhinoceros of Assam are still struggling for their survival in Kaziranga. There are nearly 500 one-horned Indian rhinoceros, 5,000 hog deer, 250 swamp deer and a few tigers; these can be a great tourist attraction if they can be conserved. The sanctuary which is the oldest in the country has been recently declared a national park. The chital, elephant, sambhar and barking deer of the Corbett National Park which is situated in the sub-montane sal forests of the Himalayan foothills can be a great draw for

the local as well as foreign tourists.

**T**he swamp deer, gaur, tiger and leopard of Kanha are no less interesting. The only home of the Asiatic lion is the Gir Forest of Gujarat. There are only 177 lions left in the sanctuary. It is the one place in the world where one can walk with lions and photograph them at close range. And we are still undecided about declaring the area a national park!

We have been wild life oriented only in our approach to the National Parks. Even the most spectacular scenery of the Himalayas has not encouraged the formation of National Parks. The alpine pastures covered with millions of flowers grazed by sheep are not available to the people. The desert with the sand dunes changing shape and size every time one looks at them are not protected and conserved as nature's gift. Unfortunately, some of the finest sand dunes which were easily approachable have been 'afforested'. Still, there are many sand dunes worth constituting into National Parks. The sea-shores we have hardly thought of as National Parks.

The mango-groves of the Sunderbans, the gigantic sal forests of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, teak and bamboo forests mixed with a variety of miscellaneous species of trees, evergreen dipterocarps and 'Deodar' forests of the hills are other places worth considering as national parks.

What is the position of tourism in our National Parks? Very few know about them and still fewer visit them. We have not yet realised them as potential resources. They are considered as the leisure playgrounds of the rich and a public waste. This results in half-hearted attempts for their development. We have some of the oldest parks in the world but these are still undeveloped. The management is many times confused.

Grazing is allowed in most of the National Parks and sanctuaries. This uncontrolled grazing is ruining the land and the concept of our National Parks. At times the cattle diseases explode out of control,



destroy the animal life in the park as happened last year in Bandipur sanctuary and a large number of gaur died of rhinderpest. It was the only place where gaur herds could be enjoyed and photographed. Now it will take years to build the same population. People want to visit the National Parks to enjoy them as they are and not to witness the folly of human interference. Their strong resentment over exotic planting and artificial planting of flowering trees in National Parks and sanctuaries are fully justified. They want preservation of indigenous flora and fauna, as it existed before 'they' came.

**W**e should develop a master plan of National Parks of the country—clearly spelling out the objectives of the parks so selected for development and the programme required to achieve the objectives. It should draw up guidelines for the broad long range plan which will guide and control the preparation of more detailed plans for the numerous park programmes of each of the parks.

When a National Master Plan for the development of National Parks is prepared, it is very necessary to have a national committee or commission to guide and control the development and utilization of National Parks. It is suggested that this committee should consist of top field naturalists of the country.

The Master Plan can only achieve its most important objectives through proper management functioning. The fact that the administration of National Parks is a specialised job and requires trained personnel has been realised the world over and we too should recognise this. Our system of park management 'in addition to duties' is not correct. We should have specialists to man our parks. There is a dearth of trained personnel. But, to start with, a four week short training camp can be organised on the same basis as is organised by the University of Michigan. The details of the course can be worked out to suit our condi-

tions and this quick training can provide park leadership to begin with. The old idea that forest officers are all round specialists does not hold good in the present age of specialization.

The research in the park has to be purely management oriented. All external and internal pressures and temptations of aides and assistance for purely academic research should be resisted and opposed. The parks are definitely not university laboratories.

In an over-populated country like ours, it is difficult to set aside large areas free from grazing and forestry operations but we can certainly select some patches of 75 to 100 square kilometers totally free from any operation including grazing as has been done in the case of the Amboseli Game Reserve in Kenya. There are in all 127 sanctuaries. At the rate of 75 to 100 square kilometers per reserve, we require only 12,000 square kilometers scattered over 127 places in the country to be free from grazing and the human axe for the development of our heritage, unspoiled and unpolluted. It has been proved beyond doubt that a National Park is not a 'locked up' resource. These 12,000 square kilometers, if properly developed, can yield more revenue by exploiting their resources.

**T**he park administration which is at present burdened with catering and other miscellaneous jobs should be relieved of these responsibilities. They should be left free to organise and administer the parks. More rest houses and tourist dak bungalows should be built to accommodate at least 60 persons at a time. Lodging and catering jobs should be left to the proper authorities; preferably they should become a part of the large international hotels network in order to ensure adequate occupancy throughout the seasons. The present accommodation should be converted into self service lodges, and utilized for local tourists.

Our ridiculously low priced lodges and entry fees into the parks should be standardised.

Charges for entry into the parks should be different for non-residents and residents. This is primarily because tourists do not have to pay taxes as do the residents.

**S**ome drastic amendment to control trade in wild life and its products is urgently needed. Wild life should be declared government property, irrespective of its occurrence and ownership, on the same basis as exists for sandal wood in Madras and Mysore, the possession of which is a cognizable offence. Violation of National Park laws should be treated as an anti-national act.

A Game Reserve does not attract as many tourists as a National Park. Kaziranga, Periyar, Bharatpur, Sariska are some of our best reserves which are better than some National Parks but unless their status is raised to that of National Parks, they are not likely to attract foreign tourists who naturally go by the established status of the land.

Self contained circuits should be worked out with uniform facilities to accommodate at least 60 persons at a time. To start with, we may develop Kaziranga, Gir Forests, Corbett, Kanha, Bharatpur and Sariska Parks as nodes of the tourists' circuits in the North and the East and similar nodes are Bandipur (Mysore) and Periyar (Kerala) in the South.

We are at the threshold of another revolution in the mass movement of people. The jumbo jets will arrive from next May and we will have to provide destinations to these tourists. Unless we plan places and provide enough attractions to hold them, they are likely to fly over the country after the first few exploratory visits (like the migratory birds from hostile waters) never to return in future. We require the implementation of conservation plans of our forests, wild life and development of National Parks, reserves and sanctuaries to attract more and more tourists. It is certain that without nature conservation, tourism may not survive long in India.

# Books

## WILD LIFE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

P. D. Stracey, IFS, Indian Board for Wild Life,  
1960.

FOREST AND FORESTRY By K. P. Sagreiya,  
National Book Trust, 1967.

Conservation of the renewable resources covers an exceedingly broad field. Wild life and forest conservation are part of a complex system the elements of which are so closely associated that whatever affects one is very apt to have a far reaching effect on one or more of the others. Both authors under consideration imply that where nature's balance has been upset by human interference, the ultimate result of the artificially imposed change is usually unfortunate, at best unpredictable.

Stracey states his purpose without fuss—that the administrator and the public must make up to the deteriorating state of our wild life before the point is reached when there is nothing left to conserve. He is realistic in agreeing that many land uses take precedence over wild life in the context of the present day economy, but deplores the struggle (which still appears to exist) between those who believe that wild life properly managed has an essential part to play, and those who will brook no obstruction to win more from the land. Yet, his hope that the government assumes responsibility for its wild life and adopts a more positive policy of direct control through departmental agencies, has been met in part at least with the establishment of the Indian Forest Service as an All India Service in 1967.

The case for wild life preservation is cogently stated. Our knowledge and acquaintance of it is part of our culture, part of our heritage. More obscure but very important is its role in the maintenance of the so-called balance of nature. That the agricultural entomologist realizes the value of the biotic potential and of trying to control the insect pests by their natural enemies, is illustrated by the author with a striking example. The apple orchards of the Kulu Valley were threatened with destruction by the woolly-aphis. Insecticides proved of no avail against this pest. But the introduction of a particular species of wasp from England saved the destruction. Indeed, after only fifteen wasps were released, the

aphis pest was reduced to such an extent that it became difficult even to obtain a specimen.

The treatment of the economic consideration, however, is slight. For, profits from the sale of animals and birds to take one instance only, are limited. What this author has not sufficiently dwelt upon is the tourism angle—the enormous profit that can accrue from the development of sanctuaries... It seems a pity not to capitalize on the images people in the West associate with India—jungles, tigers and Kipling.

What the author wrote a decade ago is still relevant today: the scientific basis of management has yet to find a place in India. At the moment the concern is chiefly with the increasing pace of destruction in the countryside in general. While there is no lack of legislation for the protection of wild life 'there are considerable handicaps due to lack of uniformity in the various States, which give loop-holes for escape from their provisions and, more important, lack of adequate machinery for enforcement'. He adds that 'a large percentage of officers, civil and police, are ignorant of the lists of protected animals and birds in the country', to which may be added the relative newness of the subject and the comparative dearth of trained workers.

Sagreiya echoes some of these sentiments in his chapter on 'wild life'. The ease with which wild life may be destroyed with the aid of fast transport, powerful and accurate weapons and a complete disregard of the laws of sport by poachers and pothunters has taken a very heavy toll of wild life. The two-horned *rhinoceros* of the Sunderbans and the Indian Cheetah are now extinct; the same fate awaits the Golden Eagle, the Great Indian Bustard, and, before long, the musk deer. But after some further consideration of this danger, and especially the excesses to which we have been prone in this regard, in considering the tourist possibilities of the Balaghat forests, he suggests that tourists be given permits for big game hunting in these forests 'which abound in tiger, panther, bear, sambhar, bluebuck...' seems to suggest that the author has not sorted out his own thoughts on the matter.

Essentially, the book intends to provide the non-specialist with basic facts about India's forest wealth and methods of forestry. Certain statistics picked from the numerous tables provided, are interesting. Compared to the world average forest area of 30 per

cent, India is at 17 per cent, the U.K. at 7 per cent and the U.S.S.R. at 51 per cent. Again, in the ratio of forest hectares to 1000 persons: Asia 300, Europe 325, USSR 5000, World 1425, India 127.

The author's chief message comes across fairly clearly. Because of 'certain lacunae' (these are not explained) maximum benefits cannot accrue. The remedy lies in all suitable wasteland and marginal agricultural land being afforested. Production from forests should be increased by their proper protection and introduction of valuable fast growing site-suitable, high yielding species of trees, and by modernizing methods of felling, transport and utilization, to minimize waste and to meet the rapidly rising demand for industrial wood. In other words to change from the somewhat static conservation forestry to dynamic orchard silviculture. He emphasizes the need for the creation of large scale plantations of fast growing and high yielding valuable species to satisfy commercial demand; while this may indicate a not undesirable insistence on greater production and revenue it must be pointed out that, whereas afforestation of barren land is desirable, the replacement of natural, mixed species forests with high yielding single species plantations should be avoided.

It is quite right to say that the attitude to forests is one of indifference, and to forestry ranges between antagonism and tolerance. As the population increases, forests are eaten into. The realization is lacking that forests are equally essential to meet certain basic needs as also to sustain agriculture. In addition to being a factor in building soil, forests help regulate the stream flow, control erosion, provide cover and food for wild animals, and commodities and recreation for man. The ravines along the Chambal is a case in point of soil erosion which can so rapidly occur in the absence of tree canopies.

At a conservative estimate, some 60 per cent of our natural forests have either been turned into exotics and plantations, or have disappeared. Messrs Stracey and Sagreiya would doubtless blame the irresponsible attitudes about them. But if we can save what we still have left, we would yet be enormously rich both faunally and floristically. It is to be hoped that such books as these are in more common circulation to pass the word along.

Navin Chawla

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE OF  
EXPERTS ON THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR  
RATIONAL USE AND CONSERVATION OF  
THE BIOSPHERE — Final Report, Paris, 4-13  
September 1968, UNESCO, 1969.**

As a backlash of man's gradual mastery of science and technology the problem of keeping the biosphere

safe and healthy has grown in serious proportions. Man has always been an important modifier of the ecosystems. He has a stake in the harmony and balance in the biosphere in so far as he is responsible for leaving the natural environment safe for future generations.

The seriousness of the challenge had been well emphasised by William Rogt and Fairfield Osborn in the late forties by pointing to the disequilibrium in the natural hydrological and biological cycles due to man's ruthless exploitation of earth's resources. Apart from the earth there has been a continuous diffusion of pollutants, like sulphur oxide from smelters, stack dust from cement plants, fluorides from aluminium and phosphate plants besides carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons from millions of automobiles plying on the roads, in the ecosphere. The fact that the layer of air available for waste disposal is usually only a fraction of troposphere clearly indicates the formidable nature of the problem.

There has been a growing awareness of the urgency of conservation of the resources of the biosphere all over the world. UNESCO has also been alive to the problem. In pursuance of its resolution 2.23 adopted at its fourteenth session it convened an intergovernmental conference at Paris in which apart from GAO and WHO of the United Nations, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) and the International Biological Programme (IBP) also participated.

The Conference was attended by delegates from sixty-three States. The agenda included soils and maintenance of fertility, water resource problems, non-oceanic aquatic environments, natural vegetation, animal ecology and wild life management, natural areas and ecosystems, air, water and soil pollution, and man and his ecosystems. The lines of action adopted by the Conference were the establishment of a Research Commission, Educational Commission, Scientific Policies and Structures Commission and making of recommendations to member States and international organizations, relating to the agenda items.

The general tenor of the discussion stressed the key role of man in the biosphere. It took note of the loss of environmental quality and a need to modify the traditional ways of exploiting the natural resources. Improved education and public information backed by a considerable amount of research in all aspects of the biosphere were recommended as the necessary steps in this direction.

The Conference had eight review papers on the agenda items which served as the basis for further discussions. Each of the papers was prepared and presented by one person along with additional comments and supplements by a few other experts. One of the important points made at the Conference was by M. G. Candau, Director General of the World Health Organization who stressed not only man's dependence on the natural resources but on himself

being one of the most valuable resources, thus making him an 'endangered species'. This certainly is the most eloquent exposition of the complexity of the problem relating to the biosphere. This also brings questions of nutrition and living space requirements within the purview of the Conference.

One cannot but be impressed by the amount of cooperation displayed in the preparation and presentation of the papers transcending all ideological barriers. Science in this context really seems to be shrinking the world not only physically but also similarly narrowing the emotional and ideological gaps between different peoples.

D. C. S.

## **THE HISTORY OF INDIAN FAMINES AND DEVELOPMENT OF FAMINE POLICY [1858-**

**1918]. By Hari Shanker Srivastava, Sri Ram Mehra & Co., 1968.**

Dr Srivastava has been preceded in this field by another author, Dr B. M. Bhatia, whose book appeared five years earlier. The subtitles of the two books bring out the difference of focus and emphasis. Dr Bhatia studied the famines as a phenomenon in the economic history of India. Dr Srivastava studies the famines as his central subject. The one concentrated attention on economic history, the other on its result. The two are not similar or parallel studies but complementary studies of two aspects of the same subject.

The author went to Professor Bisheshwar Prasad for a foreword. The learned professor rightly picked on the poverty of the people as a very important cause of famines and also mentioned increasing taxation and lack of industrial enterprise as the root causes of poverty. Impoverishment caused by these factors conspired with natural causes to visit famine on the people (pp. 2-3). Dr Srivastava, however, would like us to begin by believing with him that 'systematic over-assessment of land revenue and economic exploitation' set the stage for greater suffering in the wake of famines in modern times (p. 28).

Such ideas are reminiscent of the days of Naoroji and Dutt who were among the first people to put up such ideas in an arguable form. But no one now seriously contends that they established their thesis. Their ideas were fashionable but they were not too well founded and are not strong enough to stand the test of rigorous scrutiny in the light of the growth of the various disciplines which has taken place in recent decades. But having stated his opinion Dr Srivastava proceeds to study his subject.

There are seven chapters (II to V, VII to IX) devoted to the history of famines which appears to be the principal object of the author. His description is complete. No major famine is omitted. In between a whole chapter (the sixth) is devoted to the

study of the framing of the famine codes which were drafted to organize relief on the occurrence of famine. At a few other places (parts of the seventh and ninth chapters) the author again discusses further growth of famine relief policy. Taking all these together, the author has indeed given a history of famines at considerable length and then in an unilluminating manner a description of the evolution of the famine relief policy. The latter is scattered and rather unclear.

In the tenth, the concluding chapter, Dr Srivastava dwells at length upon the causes of famines. Fortunately, he says that the failure of rains was the most important cause of famines. It should be simple to agree with him in this, although, as he says, some other natural causes also operated in a small way. It is strange, however, to read of the political causes of famine when all that is said is that famine relief was not given promptly or widely and that government taxes were collected with rigour and coercion sometimes. There is no glamorous achievement in adding one more category of causes when that category of cause really was not there. The existence of British rule in India was indeed a political question but that is a major part of modern Indian history and not just a cause of famines.

Dr Srivastava reverts to economic causes and breaks no new ground. 'The economic implications of British rule in India have been already discussed in Chapter I' (p. 328). But the author expatiates on all the items again for our benefit and leads us through windy and involved discussions to the smug conclusion that poverty was a very important cause of famines. The author thus brings us back to square one. He begins with this idea and he ends with it. Social factors have also done their duty. They intensified suffering during famine. Social and caste inhibitions were stifling and prevented people from asking for relief and sometimes from accepting it when offered.

Quite relevant to the discussions is the author's retracing of the famine relief policy which is well brought out for different stages into which the author divides his period. Then follows a description of the relief measures actually adopted. But it is hard to digest the author's idea in over-loading his conclusion with many other subjects like emigration, land revenue, forests, railways, irrigation, takavi advances, famine insurance fund, co-operative societies and agricultural policy. Everyone of these subjects is capable of being studied in about as much length and detail as the author has devoted to famines. They should not have been bundled together as unimportant corollaries in a paltry 35 pages.

The author's sources are impressive and variegated. He has seen practically all relevant papers and has had perforce to depend for information almost entirely on official papers. Contemporary and later works, however, have too often influenced the formation of his views.

V. C. Bhutani

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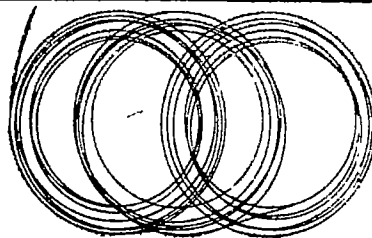
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# Communication

The problem discussed by SEMINAR in its issue of September is mistimed (which the Editor also admitted) but concern is felt not for its inability to arrest the present crisis brewing in the Congress Party but its failure to bring to surface various other aspects of the crisis. I will go further to deal with each paper separately but in a nutshell I would first like to describe the contents of the issue as frustrating as the state of the Congress Party. If this is how the SEMINAR wanted to reflect the problem then, I must say, it has succeeded in its purpose.

To start with, the problem posed by Gopal Krishna itself is as much alienated from the title (aspects of the crisis facing the ruling party) as the rank and file of the Congress from the public and, surprisingly enough, one can also notice the gap, that is between the Congress leadership and its rank and file, between the problem and the discussion on it. While on the one side Gopal Krishna is trying to show how Congress has declined in power through comparing the election results from 1952 to the latest midterm election in five States, on the other, he seems to be more concerned about two factors—stability and the national character of the party. When one criticizes the opposition parties for causing instability of various kinds—political and economic to mention the least from the long list—one has got to take note of its origin. Its inception lies in the long stability the Congress Party has enjoyed.

The poser prefers consensus as built by Jawaharlal Nehru as the remedy, to democratic socialism, which was also a gift of Nehru to the party. To me, democratic socialism, as an ideology, seems to be a positive contribution to the party. Consensus, as I take it, was a temporary approach devised by Nehru to achieve some of the programmes and at the same to maintain relative unity in the diverse sections of the party. His charisma and popular public image has enabled him in arriving at consensus on many issues with his colleagues. He was truly a 'senior among equals'. How far was it feasible for other leaders in the party to continue with the method of consensus after Nehru? In the event of their failure to arrive at a consensus, was it advisable to advocate its adherence even at the cost of the proclaimed ideology of the party, that is

democratic socialism? These are some of the questions on which the author is conspicuously silent. At one point he says, perhaps in a fit of emotion, 'It must (Congress) endeavour to remain a party of the nation with a positive commitment to social justice.' It is a Benthamite statement, asking a modern political party to do the greatest good of the greatest number. While on one hand the author seems to be facing a dilemma and is reluctant to give the Congress a certificate of health, keeping in mind the deterioration it is suffering, on the other, seeing that no alternative is emerging and 'non-Congress parties are in no better health than the Congress,' he is indulging in wishful thinking to see it continue in power for some time more without ascribing any reasons as to why it should and how it can?

Satish K. Arora's paper on 'Areas of Recovery' has succeeded, though only to a limited extent, in establishing the failures of the Congress as the ruling party. He starts on the right track when he lists causes like 'corruption, factionalism and unstable membership,' as peripheral and warns the party to adjust itself to the changed environment. But later while describing the failures of the party in agricultural, industrial, educational, employment and other such areas, he has indulged in painting the picture so dark that one may be tempted to recommend his paper to the opposition parties to use against the Congress on the eve of election. At one place he has said, 'the Congress Party, both in its role as a party and its role as the government has failed'; but while providing an answer he has embarked upon the latter and left the former untouched, except at the place where he points to the lack of information gathering facilities and suggests the need for organizational research. In the end he also makes some suggestions, though vague and wholly impracticable, such as asking for a broad base to facilitate the formulation of policies that faithfully articulate popular demands. Has the responsibility now fallen upon the readers to remind these learned scholars the basic precepts of a party system and enunciate the definition of a modern political party? Why cannot they reconcile with the idea of providing the Congress purely a status of

a political party and nothing more than that?

E.P.W. da Costa, who has the reputation of a 'foreteller' in the academic world, although his prophecies have strangely enough always been defied by circumstances, has undertaken the responsibility of digging up the fossils of the Congress for the SEMINAR. To predict anything on the basis of the 1967 and 1969 mid-term elections will be totally unrealistic because of the nature of its outcome. Both the elections, the first fully and the second partly, have exhibited the non-Congress feelings of the electorate. Moreover, the trend has shown that though Congress has lost, the major share of gain instead of going to major opposition parties, went to regional parties mostly born out of Congress. With a few more radical measures like bank nationalisation and the failures of United Front governments in power, the electorate might either positively vote Congress to power for its work, or it might negatively give it power because of its non-opposition feelings. Both ways the Congress would gain with difference only in the degree of support, which I do not venture to predict like E.P.W. da Costa.

P. N. Dhar has rightly started with the two major contributions of Nehru—mixed economy for the country's development and, non-alignment as a major guideline for the country's foreign policy. But mixed economy, as envisaged by Nehru, was a matter of arrangement in which the major economic power was to shift gradually from the private sector to the public sector. A mixed economy should not be taken as a system in which both the sectors have a fifty fifty share. Congress has failed to achieve its economic aims mainly because; first, it believed in a very gradual process of change and second, the civil service tackled the problems of the public corporations as routine affairs of the government offices. When the working of public corporations comes under attack, it is not because the socialist policies of the party are in any way unrealistic but because of the attitude of government when it enters business, instead of becoming business-like, remains governmental. There is need for major radical reforms in our Civil Service, especially its attitude of indifference which should at least go. In the end, I agree with Dhar that a mixed economy as a policy still holds valid and what is needed is that the Congress should operationalize it more speedily in a realistic way.

Rasheeduddin Khan deserves all praise for his very balanced and objective paper. To quote him. "The real dilemma facing the Congress is that it has ceased

to be, a "movement" without really becoming a "party", is very much true and to that extent one should not plead for the Congress to attain again the stature of a 'movement'. The Indian polity can be described to be in the melting pot stage. A challenge has been posed to the political parties, including the Congress, to streamline themselves ideologically to gain the real status of a 'party'. On this depends the growth of a healthy party system. Congress as a movement may succeed in providing stability but it cannot produce stabilised growth for the country. Further, I agree with him when he suggests that, 'Congress could really become a party if it acquired organizational and ideological coherence.' While pointing out the drawbacks of the 'party'. On this depends the growth of a of Nehru as his 'predecessors'. I hope, he did not include Mrs. Gandhi in the band of guards who have outlived their purpose because she has not only succeeded her father but, to put it more aptly, has through her recent actions, improved upon the inherent weaknesses that her father had suffered from. Though this paper is very well written, still it does not provide answers to most of the questions I have raised, especially about how to achieve ideological coherence?

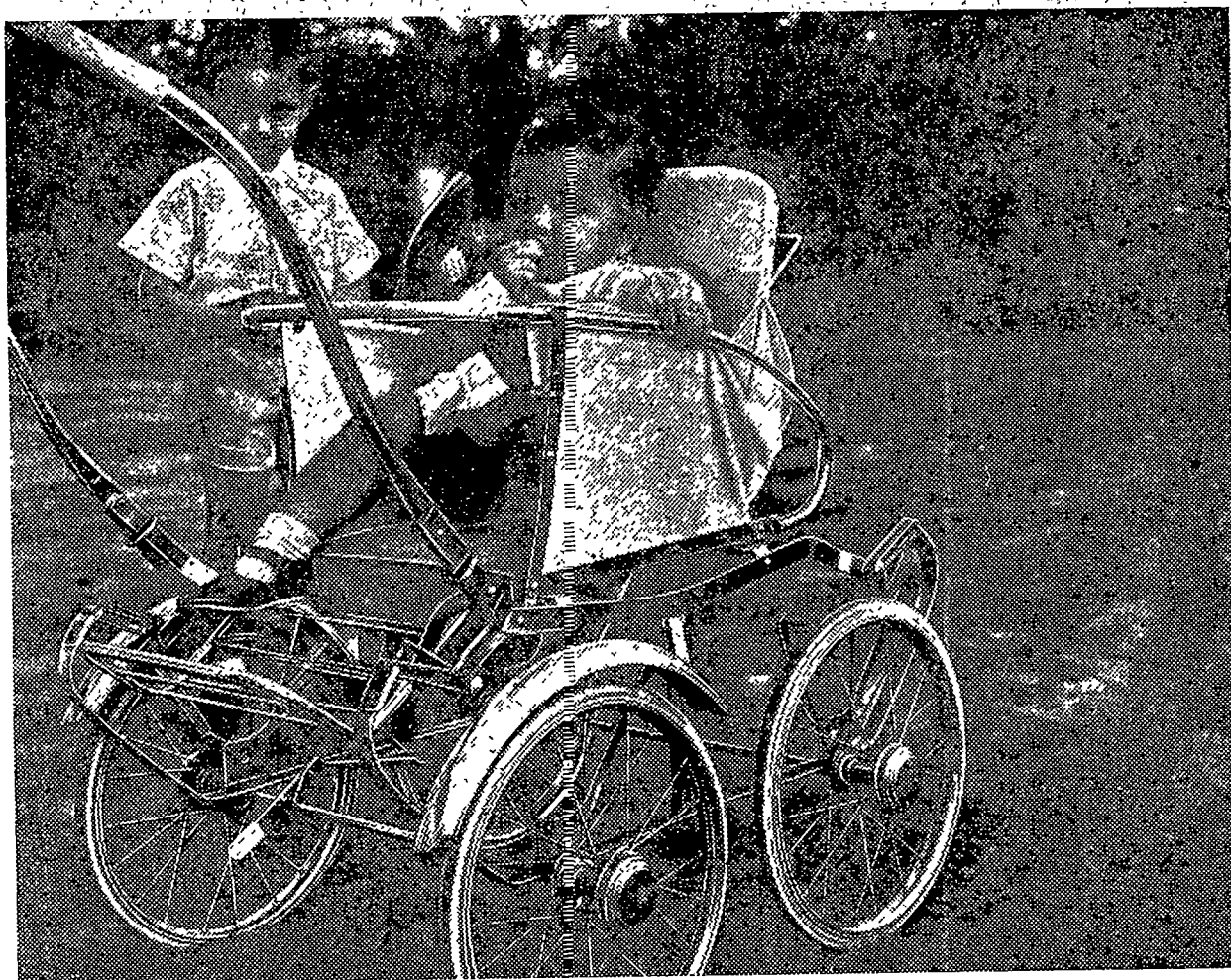
Chandra Shekhar aptly points out the over-dependence of government (party) on the civil service of the country. There is nothing wrong if a political party depends upon the Civil Service, provided it offers the right kind of advice. He also points out the existing gap between the party and the intellectuals and professionals of the country. More than this, the gap existing between the various ideologically incompatible groups within the party has alienated the party from masses. It is a pity that factions dominated the party so much, that even fresh recruits are found joining first one of the groups in the party and only later on becoming its formal members. (Thus, they give their first allegiance to the group in the party much before their formally joining the party.) Chandra Shekhar being a Congressman should have thrown some light on this aspect. Furthermore, the major weaknesses of the Congress, in the areas of the selection of the candidates and the State leadership, remained to be brought into focus properly.

In the end, these, 'six characters in search of a writer', fail to diagnose the ills Congress is suffering from.

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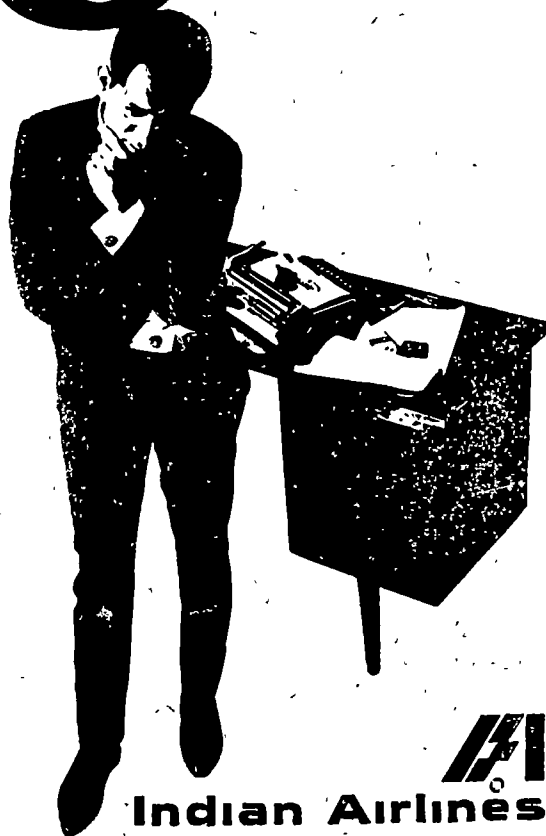
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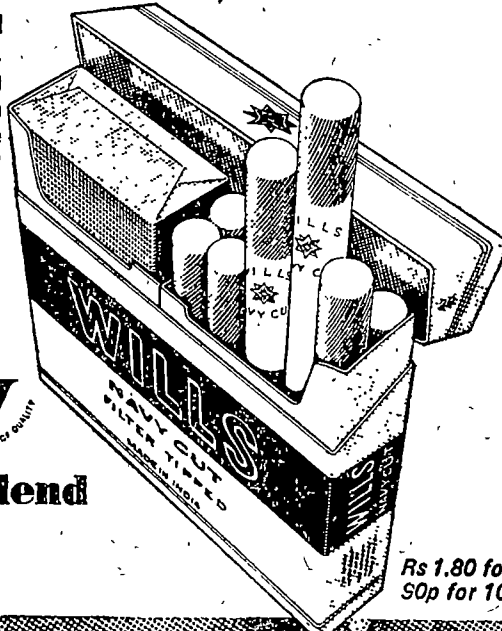
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## SECULARISM IN CRISIS

a symposium on  
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### FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography  
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### COMMUNICATIONS

Received from A. N. P. Ummerkutty (Trivandrum)  
and B. L. Maheshwari (Hyderabad)

### COVER

Designed by Dilip Chowdhury

# The problem

A Chief Minister says he has no law and order problem in his State. Only a riot! Yet, even according to his official statistics some four hundred and fifty people died. More objective observers place the figure at 3000. Whatever the truth — somewhere in between, perhaps — the fact that the process of government could not stop people from making bonfires and hurling women and children into them is indictment enough. This macabre form of entertainment lasted over 5 days and nights with large numbers of ordinary citizens joining in the orgy of a mythical revenge. The thirty thousand rifles in possession of the Ahmedabad authorities were not speedily brought into use to curb this abandon of a vegetarian people. The massacre raises certain fundamental questions. And, clearly, we have to think afresh if our secular, complex, multi-cultural society is to survive.

# Enlightened communalism

M. R. A. BAIG

HOWEVER paradoxical it may seem, in the light of present day conditions Muslims can only be led into secularism under communal leadership. The paradox needs no elaborate explanation, but some points may be made since the backward plight and position of Muslims and the causes for their present reactionary mentality is so little understood.

From the partition, the Hindus emerged stronger and the Muslims weaker than during the British period. The Hindus, even if they lost some territory, retained their leadership almost intact. Their elation at becoming independent after centuries was increased by the 'heady wine' of power as the spread of the democratic principle

reached the furthest and smallest hamlet. It is not strange, therefore, if a tremendous upsurge of self-assertion took place, and it is also not strange that in a heterogeneous country the upsurge was unilateral. Since the majority community, perhaps with varying motives, had played the major part in the freedom movement, it was perfectly natural that they should consider themselves, and act as if they were, the chief beneficiaries of freedom.

But the movement which took place was more a *freedom* movement than a *national* movement. Although the Congress was open to all, and positive attempts had been made to gain Muslim membership, since the desire for free-

dom, and not a sense of nationalism in the secular sense, had been the main qualification for Congress membership and leadership, it was possible for Sanatanists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya, Arya-Samajists such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and even open Mahasabhis such as Moonje and Savarkar to be accepted as nationalists. (In spite of the latter's attitude and acts, no secular voice has still been raised protesting against a postage stamp in his honour.)

Such communalism carried over into independence and its consequence today is the sub-national self-assertion rationalised by ethnocentric States.

Partition left the Muslims in a very different position. They lost their acknowledged leader, Jinnah; their organisation, the Muslim League; their voice, separate electorates; their god-father, the British; and their leading men due to the emigration to Pakistan, the land of Muslim opportunity, of practically all the leading politicians, lawyers, soldiers, and business and professional men. To this they could not even complain since the Muslim League had secured their almost unanimous support.

Partition therefore resulted in the Hindus emerging stronger and with a justifiable resentment against the Muslims who had supported partition and yet claimed that they should be treated as if they had not. There was also the extreme bitterness, sometimes amounting to vengeance, imported by the evacuees and refugees from Pakistan. The Muslims, on the other hand, were left leaderless in almost every walk of life, and with a mass guilt-complex due to their support of the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, and a mass inferiority complex due to their extremely backward position vis-a-vis the Hindus. Both of these have merged into a persecution complex which is kept nourished by Hindu communalism.

Although the acceptance of secularism was a great act of

humanism and courage on the part of the Congress leaders, the unfortunate fact is that the country is far from secular. In fact, to impose secularism on a country so emotionally balkanised was as likely to prove successful as making an omelette out of hard-boiled eggs. Moreover, superimposed on the communal legacy inherited from the past, the new doctrine of Hindu Rashtra has further alienated the two communities. The ever-recurring communal riots also effectively prevent any rapprochement.

The result of such conditions and circumstances is that the Hindus, as a whole and in parts, have steadily grown more self-assertive, and the Muslims have correspondingly become increasingly insecure and have retreated more and more into their communal shell. Shells, by the very nature of things, are invariably reactionary. Such a state of affairs makes them easy prey to obscurantist influences which take the fullest advantage of their fears and grievances against the majority community to strengthen their hold. A considerable number of parties and organisations have, therefore, almost inevitably, come into existence which not only keep anti-Hindu sentiment alive but instil in the Muslims a sense of separate identity. Of these organisations, the *Jamaat-e-Islami* is perhaps the most active and best known. How harmful such organisations are to the Muslims themselves needs no emphasis. Moreover, such a combination of factors has made Muslim activity merely reactive, in that instead of having any positive movements, political, cultural or social, Muslims now merely react to Hindu moves and actions, communal or secular.

The question therefore is how to liberate them from such influences, and how to get them out of their shell. Once upon a time great hopes had lain in the unifying effects of joint electorates.

But the experiences of the last 22 years have effectively belied such hopes. It is true that a surprising number of Muslims have been elected. But election serves no purpose unless those elected make their presence felt. If a Harijan is molested in any part of India, there is an uproar in Parliament. But rarely is a Muslim, or any other voice raised when Muslims are victims. The fact is that the severe competition the Congress is receiving from the Jana Sangh, and having to woo voters mostly caste-minded and communal, forces the former party to avoid any charge of being pro-Muslim. The Hindus, therefore, except those elected on the Communist ticket, generally keep silent, and if a Muslim interests himself in Muslim grievances, he is branded a communalist and has little chance of re-election.

Communalism, incidentally, Muslims have not failed to note is only reprehensible when practised by themselves. The ethnic chauvinisms of the Hindu sub-nations are explained away as the justifiable redressing of regional imbalances. But any collective Muslim activity, however innocent, is immediately regarded as something sinister, and even as a stepping-stone to another Pakistan.

In many constituencies there is a large Muslim element, and their votes sometimes tip the balance. Great efforts, cynical and sometimes unscrupulous, are made to secure them. It is a known fact that Hindus standing for election have promised Muslims that if their votes are cast for this or that party, no attempts will be made to change their personal laws. Such assurances have made the task and position of liberal-minded Muslims almost impossible.

To advocate reform of Muslim personal law is made even more difficult due to the civil code being generally known as the Hindu Civil Code, not because it is Hindu as such but because it applies

only to Hindus. Muslims, therefore, are being led by anti-Hindu leaders to believe that if they are brought under its provisions it would amount to 'Hinduising' their social system. Moreover, Muslims believe that their personal law, properly interpreted, has certain provisions in advance of the civil code as it stands at present. It has to be explained to them that a uniform civil code that governs all communities would necessarily have to be one that does not violate any Islamic injunctions. In fact, a small group of liberal-minded Muslims, calling themselves the Muslim Progressive Group, have already prepared draft laws to which no Muslim can object on religious grounds.

Many other reforms are also necessary if the Muslims are to be rehabilitated and to march in step with their fellow Indians. Purdah is still in force in a surprisingly large degree; family planning is believed to be against the injunctions of Islam; and regardless of religion, there is not sufficient identification with the cultural streams of the country and too much emotional involvement with West Asia. Muslims also still cling too much to traditional occupations, mostly minor, and are reluctant to enter new fields of professional and commercial activity. (A glance through the Delhi Telephone Directory will bring out their economic position.) There are many other areas in which purely communal reform and leadership are necessary.

Parallel to this a great psychological gap exists between the two communities and an almost complete lack of confidence in Hindu leadership. For this the Hindus are themselves to blame. The incidence of communalism among them is a matter of guesswork. But the number of Hindus who actively interest themselves in Muslim affairs can be counted on one hand. The fact is that the communal Hindu is active and the non-communal Hindu indifferent or apathetic. It therefore becomes logical and inevitable that Muslims will be persuaded to change their

present way of life and modes of thinking only by those whose bonafides are above their suspicion. By default, if nothing else, these can only be Muslims. (The majority of liberal Muslims are also, unfortunately, indifferent and apathetic.)

Moreover, with the passing of the feudal order there are no more any of those who were formerly considered as the 'natural' leaders of the community. The vacuum, as already brought out, has been filled by traditionalists and revivalists who keep the Muslim masses in mental *mohallas* in what is virtually the medieval age. The new leaders have therefore to earn their leadership by service to and field-work in the community. Such service is communal service, in that they must endeavour to shake the Muslims into the twentieth century; to loosen the stranglehold of obscurantism; to encourage them to play their full part in all national activities; to rehabilitate them economically by helping them to find employment and persuading them to take up new professions; to impress on them the evils of separatism and its benefits of assimilation; and generally to make them aware that the present century and the technological future demands that they prosper or perish.

It is obvious that such 'communalism' is not directed against any other community but merely compresses into one word the adage: 'Charity begins at home first'. No one, for instance, objects to the activities of the YMCA or the housing colonies built by Parsee trusts. There are also innumerable regional societies in every city devoted to the welfare and advancement of people of particular ethnic origins. Such communalism is in no way anti-secular but should be regarded as a tributary flowing into the main stream. By strengthening the part one strengthens the whole. It is a communal means to a secular end and is in every way *enlightened* communalism. All minorities need it, and none more than the Muslims.



# Modernization

ZAFAR, IMAM

MODERNIZATION of a society or a social group is a complex and long-drawn out process. More so when a small community must occupy itself with the process of modernization within a larger society with all its checks and balances and waywardness and falterings, and which in itself is far from being scientifically oriented, although more developed than the small community in question.

All these generalizations are indeed true and very relevant when we talk of the modernization of Indian Muslims within the national fibre of modern India. Let us begin from the very beginning of this complex and long-drawn out social process, the social bases of the contemporary Indian Mus-

lim community, so as to find out the objective conditions for their possible changes and adjustments towards modernization.

Before going into this discussion, some widespread sense and nonsense about Indian Muslims must be put into proper perspective. The nonsensical controversy on the legitimacy of Indian Muslims as Indian citizens defies any rational argument; this is rational only in the sense that this provides a well-worn out Machiavelian sanction behind the socioeconomic bases of our politicians and political parties. The rest of it is pure nonsense and its practise in the ugly form of recurrent communal violence is largely an administrative problem with which the establishment must

grope if it wants to rule and prosper in this country.

**T**he sensible controversy over Indian Muslims being a distinctive social community with its own laws of motions, however, needs serious consideration. One view is that Indian Muslims cannot be regarded as one compact and closely knit social community because they are scattered all over India and there is a distinctive mark of regional culture and history on them to which they belong; there is no uniformity or common elements among them. The other view is that, after all, Indian Muslims are part of a larger whole, the Indian society, and any distinctive approach to their problems is as much unscientific as uncalled for. Yet another view is that to consider Indian Muslims as a social entity with its own natural laws of motion is fundamentally irrational, even communal.

In my opinion, Indian Muslims are one social community with their own characteristic laws of motion having distinctive common traits and common problems which distinguish them from other social groups or communities or even from the larger whole of the Indian society. To say this does not mean, and certainly I do not even imply, that as Indian Muslims are a distinct social community, a unique or special, privileged, or unprivileged, approach to their problems is required. Paradoxically enough, the two are contradictory and inapplicable.

To substantiate my opinion in detail is to go beyond the scope of this article. Suffice here to draw attention to a few most pertinent examples. In spite of distinctive regional influences, there are some common traits among Indian Muslims mainly conditioned and dictated by their religious outlook and by their historical and socio-economic background. To name a few: religious belief and practice notwithstanding the minor religious schism, mode of dress, eating habits, social etiquette and social customs, lan-

guage (with Urdu fast becoming a mark of culture and social status even among the South Indian Muslims and as a means of intercourse between them and the North Indian Muslims), a general affinity with the Muslims in other parts of the world and, lastly, indeed the most important, their growing economic and social backwardness.

**I**t is not suggested here that all these examples are true of all Indian Muslims, but one or two more are applicable to them irrespective of their social status and personal make-up. The kind of reaction that evokes from the Indian Muslims the controversy about their cultural traits, the Urdu language and the general feeling of insecurity, whether they are religious or atheist, further reinforces my argument of their distinctive social group identifications.

Now that Indian Muslims can be rightly considered as a distinctive social community, the discussion on their modernization makes some sense. Hence let me begin at the beginning: the social bases of Indian Muslims as a distinctive community in India today with their own laws of motion.

After the establishment of Pakistan, 55 million Muslims were left in India. A large majority of these Muslims belonged to the lower strata of society—poor peasants and some workers, the lower middle class and a very tiny minority comprising the educated professional and rich elite. Muslim society in India was robbed of its demanding and forward-looking middle class and self-centred elite group who made their home in Pakistan. Thus Indian Muslims were deprived of their leading dynamic force as a result of the political division of the country while, on the other hand, an unnatural vacuum was created in their socio-economic set-up. Jawaharlal Nehru was shrewed enough to realize the necessity of filling in this vacuum and thus turning Indian Muslims into one of the most secure bases of the State-

structure he wanted for India. Under his benevolent leadership and with his characteristic sympathy and involvement, he actively encouraged the growth of new classes, of 'new riches', a bureaucratic elite, professional politicians and watched the upgrading of the lower middle classes into the upper middle class. The large majority of Indian Muslims—the poor peasants and urban workers—were left out of this natural growth. Hence, today, after 22 years of independence, Indian Muslim society has grown into a class-ridden society with all its virtues and evils.

Perhaps it can well be argued that given the general compulsions of the Indian society as a whole, Nehru or no Nehru, this was a rational and inevitable development among Indian Muslims as well. True, but much of the prevailing smugness of our ruling elite, the cacophony of politicians and the rationalization of political commentators about the future of Indian Muslims will remain so long as the basic fact of the class ridden character of Indian Muslim society is not duly recognised.

**N**ot even the Muslims themselves have given due recognition to this fact, if their views on modernization or reform among the community are taken as evidence. The revivalist view counters the necessity of modernization by the defence mechanism of religious sanctity. The centrists or traditionalists are weary because of their fear of disturbing the *status quo*. The liberals find this a convenient means for asserting their elite character by indulging in old Muslim League *modus operandi* of appeals, petitions and walking in the corridors of power. And the leftists are too engrossed in their power game to give due cognizance to the distinct and well-defined nature of the need for modernization of Indian Muslims.

None of them have shown a public awareness that to equate

modernization and reform of Indian Muslims with the abolition of their personal law or the end of purdah among their women, necessary though they are, are no motivated class interests of the motivated by class interests of the Muslim elite and ruling group in a bid to turn a blind eye to the real and fundamental issues. Once this is recognised, the problem of modernization of Indian Muslims assumes new and purposeful dimensions.

As we all know, any new trend in a society can be created and promoted when there exists a social base for it. Likewise, for any purposeful step towards modernization of Indian Muslims a social base must be created. Two pre-requisites must be fulfilled for creating such a social base. The one is striking at the social base *within* the Indian Muslim society which thrives on the backwardness of Indian Muslims, namely, the rich and the privileged class. The other is establishing a live and organic relationship with those forces striving for similar objectives in the Indian society as a whole. In practical terms, the first pre-requisite means the politicalization of the large majority of Indian Muslims who are still downtrodden and live in poverty, ignorance and religious bigotry.

The process of politicalization is simply not a negative movement against religion or for their further assimilation into the majority of the Indians. It must have the positive contents of concrete demands and socially viable objectives conducive to the Muslim masses and as a result of grass-root work at mass level and not through vague slogans and elite politicking. It can take a small and scattered form at the initiative of Muslims themselves and at the embryonic stage it can act as a pressure group within our democratic system on those national forces which have common objectives at the national level.

This brings us to the second pre-requisite without which indeed the

first is toothless. It is about time that the broad mass of the Indian Muslims realized that the phase of 'emotional socialism' is over in India and that their democratic rights can only be ensured by actively participating in the coming struggle for ideological socialism and by supporting those forces which are striving to win this battle. The choice before them is quite obvious, and the will to implement this choice into action must be directed at achieving the fulfilment of both these pre-requisites. Self-pity is to retreat, inverted communalism is self-defeating and bravado to get their allegiance to this country accepted is uncalled for, while their action in alliance with the democratic forces of our country is the key to their problems.

However, the task of creating a social base for modernization must exclusively rest on the Indian Muslims themselves. By exclusiveness it is not suggested that they should work for this in isolation. On the contrary. But what is meant by being exclusive is that it is primarily their responsibility to knock out their old social base by waging a struggle against the privileged and affluent among them, while at the same time working in communion with those forces who are doing the same at a national level. Thus, indeed, their struggle acquires the two-pronged objective of dislodging their own exploiting elite within their own social community and of providing a helping hand to others at the national level. Members of the majority community can only help and support them; it is they alone who have to cleanse their own Augean stable first. Their struggle would have a decisive influence on the similar struggle on the national plane and the success or failure of either of these will affect the other.

As it can be seen, I have purposely avoided talking of actual reform and modernization. To me modernization assumes a social

purpose only when a social base is created for it. As it is within the present limitations of the socio-economic and political structure of contemporary India, there is hardly any social base existing for such modernization of the Indian Muslim society, or for that matter, any other distinctive community in India. Hence, modernization with a social purpose must remain a distant objective which can only be achieved through the transitory phase of the politicalization process. In this transitory phase, the Muslim masses will learn to react to concrete socio-economic problems of our country in a democratic way and gradually will be able to discard their traditional emotional and obscurantist approach to them.

Thus, modernization of Indian Muslims within the present limitations of our national life simply amounts to politicalization of Indian Muslims, a process which will eventually pave the way for modernization with a social purpose tuned to the needs of the large majority of Indian Muslims in particular, and the country as a whole, in general. Only then will modernization assume the scientific contents of multiplicity of cultures and their regional variations keeping intact their organic link with the healthy traditions of the past, yet deriving their live force equally from the new socio-economic base within the democratic structure of our society.

To propound such a view is not to underestimate the vital role that education and reforms-from-above, like abolition of Muslim personal law, end of the seclusion of women and promoting a sense of physical security, can play in creating a psychological climate for uplifting Indian Muslims. But they have limited purposes and short-term objectives, and nothing more. A modern Indian Muslim society in harmony and integrated with a modern Indian nationalism—both are non-existent today—is still far off. It is indeed a long way to Tipperary!

# Structure of a riot

G. S. BHARGAVA

COMPARING what happened in Ahmedabad in September last with the pattern of Hindu-Muslim rioting before 1947, one can draw the contours of a communal riot in independent India. And with minor variations they apply to the several hundred of them witnessed during the last 22 years.

For instance, in Bombay in 1946 it was an organised 'war' between thugs of the two communities. The others were relatively unaffected. Groups of *bhayyas* (the endearing term for the migrants from U.P.) would be organised to loot, burn and kill on Mohammed Ali Road; *mowalis* (ruffians) from Pydhoni would work havoc in the Kalbadevi area. A Muslim living in Khar or a Hindu resident of Colaba would not be pounced upon by neighbours for religious reasons. The elite of both the communities was unscathed. As far as I can recall, no special police protection was provided for Ibrahim Chundrigar, the local leader of the Muslim League.

The police, by and large, was impartial. It was essentially a law and order problem for them. Only the force was not large enough to deal with individual cases of violence like stray stabblings or isolated attacks on property. But there was no question of groups of people violating the curfew or indulging in orgies of violence.

If Ahmedabad is an indication, the position is far different today. Fifteen days after the rioting I

did not notice any feeling of remorse for the ghastly crimes. And the persons I spoke to were not members of a communal organisation or professional Muslim-baiters. They were lawyers, traders, journalists and students and had mostly voted Congress in the 1967 general election. Even members of Communist-led trade unions were no different. The crux of the argument was that the Muslims could not be trusted and that they had provoked the trouble.

In other words, communal violence now is no longer the product of maniacal minds. There is mass hysteria behind it. The actual perpetrators of the crimes may be comparatively fewer but virtually the entire community gives them moral support. I was told that scores of middle class women stood by and encouraged a gang of students dismantling a place of worship. That was at dead of night with the curfew on!

Several of the affected areas in Ahmedabad were middle class housing colonies. But religion cut across even shared values of life and ways of living. A reporter in a leading newspaper had to abandon a flat he had rented because his Hindu neighbours would not have him. He then found shelter in a colleague's house but very soon pressures were brought to bear on the host. Ultimately he left Ahmedabad.

The nephews of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, our national leader not

long ago, were not also spared. They had to seek shelter with their families in a refugee camp. Even more grotesque was the attack on the residence of a Muslim whose elder brother was a martyr in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity and for whom a statue had been erected.

Against this background, effective police action would have meant swimming against the current of the whole Hindu sentiment. It was also plausible that many members of the police force shared the community's distrust of the Muslims. As a police officer put it, can a constable intervene and save a thief from being belaboured by persons whom he tried to rob?

**H**ow was this psychosis built up? The gulf between the communities was widening gradually. The Muslims had kept away from the Mahagujarat agitation, although Gujarati was their language and a separate State would be to their advantage, too. Some of the 'bad characters' among them had also acted as informers against the Mahagujarat movement, not for ideological reasons but because it helped them to remain on the right side of the police. They could smuggle and sell illicit liquor with the police looking in a different direction.

Just as the Congress-led satyagraha of the pre-independence days was a predominantly Hindu affair in many areas, with the Muslim League staying away from it, so have been most of the popular agitations since independence. Even in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, where the Muslim League is still existing in its old form, the Muslims as a body are made to shun popular movements, be they directed against Hindi or in favour of a shipyard. It is not my intention to justify those agitations or to claim that they should be supported by all. The merits are immaterial in this particular context. The more

basic issue is that the leadership of the Muslim community has chosen to isolate itself from the mainstream of popular sentiment. The exceptions perhaps are the pro-Urdu agitation in Bihar and the Mulki movement in Hyderabad; but as their misfortune would have it they came to be dubbed communal agitations.

Another disservice which the leadership continues to do to the Muslim community is the perpetuation of the system of block votes. It seems that in Ahmedabad the key to nearly two hundred thousand Muslim votes lies with a handful of people. They can switch public feeling on and off at their convenience. For instance, there was a trivial instance involving the *Holy Qoran* some months ago. A police vehicle was said to have been involved in an accident in which damage was done to copies of the book. In retaliation, Muslims gheraoed and stoned a police station in the heart of the old city, not far from Khadia, the epicentre of Hindu nationalism.

**T**he authorities intervened to make a police officer tender a public apology for the incident. According to the Jana Sangh, it was done to secure Muslim votes for the Congress in an impending election. That led to the reiteration of the theory that the Congress was appeasing Muslim 'communalists' for their votes and did not consider Hindu religious pride too heavy a price to pay for them.

Such is the bane of block votes that even the so-called Leftists cannot resist the temptation to avail themselves of the facility. The demonstration against the desecration of the Al Aqsa mosque was one such instance. While the intensity of Muslim sentiment on the subject cannot be denied, the time lag of three weeks between the incident and the demonstration disproves the claim of spontaneity for it. According to my information, it was a group of Right-Communist

leaders who mooted the idea of the demonstration. But instead of making it an all-party affair, they relied on the local Muslim leaders. Even the Mayor had not been associated with it. Some of the Muslim leaders had their own axe to grind. They wanted to impress upon the Congress leadership that they alone could deliver the goods so far as the Muslim votes were concerned.

**T**his is not to justify the alibi that the demonstration provoked the subsequent rioting. There was no means of keeping a check on the slogans to be raised in such a polyglot procession. Secondly, even conceding that some of the slogans were objectionable, there was no explanation for the fact that a full three weeks had elapsed before the reaction made itself felt.

With a commission of inquiry going into the Ahmedabad incidents, their origin and development, it is neither necessary nor prudent to recapitulate them. But, speaking generally, the argument that the Muslims themselves provoke rioting can be stretched to cover any situation. If the unfortunate attack on the Jagannath temple in Ahmedabad had not taken place, the pro-Islam slogans raised by a section of the Al Aqsa demonstration would have been enough. If that was not there, the insult to the *Ramayana* at the hands of a Muslim sub-inspector would have come in handy. Elsewhere in Jabalpur and Meerut even boy-girl incidents were enough to touch off rioting.

The tendency to view crime in a religious context leads to all kinds of complications. For instance, it led to law-abiding, respectable residents of Gandhi Nagar colony in Ahmedabad harbouring a Hindu *goonda* to protect them from his Muslim counterparts. According to the story I have heard, the residents were harassed by some anti-social elements living not far from the co-operative housing colony. Not having secured relief from the

police, they engaged the services of a Hindu wrestler who was given a house to stay in the colony. During the riots a Muslim mob in search of the wrestler was fought by others resulting in several deaths. Significantly, none of the Hindu residents of the area whom I met thought it reprehensible to patronise a *goonda*. But the position would have been different if he happened to be a Muslim.

Secondly, it is often propounded that communal rioting is not like a student demonstration or any other agitation and should be put down with a heavy hand. But can it be in practice? When the entire community is worked up, the police being part of it are liable to be affected by it. The utmost the most conscientious of them could do in Ahmedabad was to advise the Muslims to seek safety in the refugee camps.

Another disheartening aspect of the new trend in communal rioting is that even organised labour is not immune from it. It seems that they accept the leadership of their trade unions only in their factories when wage struggles are waged. At home, in their *mohallas*, they are either Hindus, Muslims or Harijans. The irony of the situation was tragically brought home in Ahmedabad when three Muslim trade unionists of the Marxist Party were done to death in working class localities.

To sum up, running down the so-called communal organisations and eulogising Hindu-Muslim unity is ineffective except as a pastime. If communalists were confined only to Jana Sangh members, the Ahmedabad riots would not have taken place. The fact should, therefore, be faced that there is a gulf between the two communities and wishing it out of existence does not help. Having done that, if it can be ensured that religion does not determine the social and political behaviour of a large mass of people, we will be nearer the goal of communal amity.

# Religion

KARAN SINGH

IN the peculiar context in which the word has come to be used in India, communalism implies thinking and acting from a narrowly religious and sectarian viewpoint rather than in the broader national interest. This being so, we must examine the relationship between communalism and religion to see whether in fact there is any inescapable bond between them as is often alleged.

Not only in India but throughout the world, religion has through the ages played two distinct roles in society. On the one hand it had the effect of unifying large sections of people who would otherwise have remained fragmented and fractured into petty tribes and principalities thus bringing about a tremendous degree of cohesion among large groups of human beings within States and also transcending national barriers. On the other, religion has also led to sharp and severe divisions between man and man, group and group, nation and nation.

The history of mankind is replete with wars and crusades

based upon religious fanaticism, and within countries there have been large-scale internecine riots and civil wars based upon religious differences. There is, of course, the third aspect of religion, in fact its real and crucial role, which lies in providing the philosophical background and psychological motivation for the individual spiritual quest, but this has an individual rather than a sociological impact.

**I**n India we can see all these aspects of religion clearly at work through the long vistas of our history. There is no doubt that Hinduism has been largely responsible for the continuing unity of India despite its incredible political fragmentation; indeed, without this cementing force it would have been impossible for the concept of India to have survived the vicissitudes inflicted by many centuries of foreign domination. It is also true, however, that since the advent of Islam there have been many occasions on which the followers of these two great religions have come into bitter and severe conflict.

The partition of India, itself, despite our firm disavowal of the two-nation theory, was based essentially upon the breaking away of large sections of Muslim majority areas, and to that extent Pakistan was the measure of our failure to integrate into the body politic of India large sections of the Muslim population. It has until now been fashionable to lay the blame for partition exclusively at the door of the British. There is little doubt that our foreign rulers were in no small measure responsible, but it seems to me that scholars belonging to the post-independence generation should take another look at the whole genesis and development of Pakistan; the results may be as interesting as they are uncomfortable!

Despite the trauma of partition, accompanied as it was by the most horrifying communal riots in

which lakhs of innocent men, women and children perished, it is a tribute to the enlightenment of our leaders and the inherent good sense of our people that we adopted a Constitution based upon complete equality for all religions, and that we have in fact been able to create a functioning secular democracy.

It is true that our secularism is by no means fully successful, and that communal riots continue to throw their baneful shadow over our body politic. It is also true that our law enforcement authorities are often unable to give protection to the victims of communal fury. And yet I submit that it would be wrong for us to get caught up in a paroxysm of self-denigration and join in the chorus of the prophets of doom who claim that there has been no progress in India since Independence. The fact is that India is one of the few genuinely free multi-religious societies in the world, providing to fully one-seventh of the human race opportunities for complete religious liberty.

**C**ommunalism, however, persists. In many ways, of course, it is inevitable that in a vast multi-religious nation like ours each religious community should seek to follow its own customs and rituals. This is by no means unhealthy; indeed, like some vast multi-coloured tapestry, the different religious traditions of India add to the richness of our total national personality. The danger arises only when commitment to the particular community to which we happen to belong is distorted into a narrow sectarianism that gives rise to suspicion and animosity against other religions and caste groupings. It is then that the broad stream of religion and philosophy gets broken up into narrow, constricted channels in which all sorts of distasteful and malodorous infections flourish.

As I see it, there are only two answers to communalism. One is

to eschew religion altogether. Although this may appear an attractive solution to some, it would really be, rather like cutting off the head to cure a headache. Religion is woven deeply into the texture of our consciousness, and indeed the extraordinary challenges of the nuclear age, with its unprecedented scientific and technological progress accompanied by psychological stresses unknown in any previous era of human history, seem to be driving more and more people throughout the world to seek once again in spiritual value an inner equilibrium from which they can better face the ordeal of change that is upon them.

Outworn dogmas, empty rituals and absurd superstitions that have long masqueraded under the cover of religion are certainly collapsing, as indeed they must. But the eternal yearning of the human spirit for peace and certitude has, if anything, grown deeper with the breakdown of the comfortable security that used to be provided by traditional religious formulations. What is needed, therefore, is a bold restatement of religious and spiritual ideals in terms of the nuclear age rather than an attempt to abolish religion itself.

If religion is to remain, as it must, the only other way of ending communalism lies in a proper understanding of the purposes of religion. The *Hundaka Upanishad* has a beautiful mantra which can be translated thus:

'As flowing rivers (from wheresoever they may arise) merge into the same ocean casting off name and form, so do the knowers (from wheresoever they may come) attain to the same Supreme Divinity, freed from all limitations.'

**I**f we look upon all religious disciplines as so many different paths to the same goal, the animosity which obscurantism and ignorance encourages will automatically fall away. If we can have the good sense to appreciate that our own religion by no means possesses a monopoly of

wisdom, and that every religion seeks to enshrine in its own way the same essential quest for truth and spiritual sustenance, our attitude towards other religions will necessarily become more enlightened. Even at the risk of repeating a cliché, it needs to be pointed out that the Rig Vedic dictum 'The Truth is one, the wise call it by many names' remains valid.

It is those blinded by a narrow-minded fanaticism which leads them to the absurd conviction that they alone are the repositories of truth and wisdom, who are mainly responsible for the suspicion and mistreatment of people belonging to other communities. Fanaticism and ignorance go well together, and are invariably accompanied by an utter lack of spiritual experience. Indeed, it is an almost mathematical dictum that fanaticism varies in inverse proportion to the degree of spiritual realization.

At its deepest religion is an uplifting, a widening, a maturing phenomenon. The mystics of all the world's great religions are bound to each other by that deepest of all links—spiritual experience. It is the integral concept of religion, therefore, that has to be reiterated and made part of our educational system and our national life if the virus of communalism is to be finally destroyed. Unless this is done no amount of mere legislation or administrative precautions are going to really solve this vexing problem of communalism that remains one of free India's greatest challenges.

If this thesis is accepted, the question arises as to what concrete steps should be taken to introduce into our national consciousness this broader concept of religion so that the narrower formulations gradually lose their hold over the minds of our people. As I have said, we start with the tremendous advantage that our predominant religion has as its basic philosophical foundation, the acceptance of all religions as different paths to the same goal. This by itself, however, is

not enough. Action is required on two different levels.

Firstly, within our various religions themselves a campaign has got to be launched to broaden the outlook of priests and others connected with formulating opinion within each community. This will not be an easy task, because unfortunately the priestly class in any religious community is not necessarily the most enlightened. Nevertheless, a major campaign has to be launched in this regard by the more active and emancipated sections of religious thought. Specially within Hinduism there is need for the setting up of a chain of centres for the purpose of training *pujaris* in the correct method of conducting worship, using Sanskrit and creatively interpreting religious texts. In the process, a valuable effort can be made to inject into their thought processes the broader interpretation of religion that I have mentioned above.

**T**he second sphere of action concerns our educational system. While overtly religious instruction cannot be undertaken by government, to argue therefrom that no spiritual values can or should be taught would be tantamount to throwing out the baby along with the bath water. Indeed, the concepts of the spiritual unity of all mankind and the essential unity of all religions have got to be built into our educational system if the minds of our younger generations are to be creatively influenced. This aspect has not received the attention that it deserves, and in my view this has been one of the main reasons that despite two decades of freedom the communal virus persists in our body politic.

To sum up, therefore, the answer to communalism lies not in the impossible task of abolishing religion but in a broader, more enlightened interpretation of the religious concept and its active propagation within religious communities and in our educational system.



# Danger signals

GIRILAL JAIN

IT is difficult to be certain whether the Hindu-Muslim riots in India are relics of a dying past which will disappear in course of time or warning signals of graver dangers ahead. A fairly strong case can be made in favour of either viewpoint. But it will be wrong to dismiss the second possibility and thereby evade the responsibility of evolving a practical policy to reduce this risk which, in my view, cannot be over-emphasised.

Most intellectuals in India still take the complacent view that modernisation—education and industrialisation—will by itself corrode the traditional way of life and the communal antipathies that have accompanied it over the centuries. Recent developments in the United States, Northern Ireland, Canada and Belgium should dispel this easy optimism. The United States is being torn apart by racial conflicts; Northern Ireland has witnessed fierce and prolonged religious riots between the Catholics and the Protestants and Canada and Belgium are plagued with disputes arising out of language and cultural differ-

ences. These factors have not yet produced intolerable tensions in the Soviet Union but several experts believe that it is only a matter of time before they do.

Contrary to the popular belief modernisation does not erode the sense of separate identity, particularly when other factors like religion, language, customs and history tend to emphasise it. Faced with a threat to their traditional way of life individuals and communities emphasise their separateness and special virtues. That is why colonial domination all over Asia has led to a religious revival—Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Societies deprived of self-esteem on account of their failure to cope with the challenge of modern civilization tend to fall back on the past for moral support and sustenance. So universal has been this experience that it is well-nigh impossible to challenge it.

Indian experience is by itself sobering. The demand for Pakistan came from the Muslim intelligentsia and not from the traditionalist *ulema*. The British

rulers aided and abetted this separatist demand. But it is sheer make-believe for anyone to think of the Muslim League as purely a British creation or British-sponsored conspiracy. The more the Muslim intelligentsia came under western influence the more desperate became its need to re-affirm its separate identity in anti-Hindu terms. The demand for a Muslim homeland was the logical culmination of this psychological situation. No amount of concessions by the Congress—parity with the more numerous caste Hindus and reservations in legislatures and services far out of proportion to the strength of the Muslim community—could have satisfied its deeper urges.

It also remains fashionable for many Indian intellectuals to say that only if Gandhiji and Tilak, Aurobindo and others before him, had not imported Hindu religious symbols into the nationalist struggle the Muslim separatist movement would not have taken root. This is a highly romantic and a historical view. It assumes that a mass movement could have been built on a purely rational basis, that increasing politicisation need not have been accompanied by a cultural throw-back and that the minority community would have been drawn into the nationalist movement if it did not acquire religious undertones. Sir Syed Ahmed, it should be recalled, advised the Muslim intelligentsia to keep away from the Congress when it was led wholly by westernised gentlemen who merely petitioned the British Government, when no one had heard of Hindu nationalism and men like Tilak and Aurobindo were nowhere on the country's political horizon. This advice was heeded by and large by the Muslim intelligentsia.

Partition has not settled the problem. The Muslim community is as jealous of its separate identity today as ever. Its determination not only to preserve Urdu in the Urdu-speaking North but

also to extend it to non-Urdu speaking areas like Kerala, Maharashtra and Gujarat, the spread of the Tabligh movement, the Islamisation of communities like the Meos who even till late observed Hindu customs and caste distinctions, the growth of old-style *madrasahs* with their emphasis on religious instruction, and the massive influence of the *ulema*, amply illustrate this point.

It is hardly necessary to add that the Muslim intelligentsia acquiesces in, if it does not fully endorse, the community's opposition to the extension of a common civil code to it not so much because the former shares the latter's unshakeable faith that the inherited Muslim Law is perfect but because it is not willing to concede that Parliament with its non-Muslim majority should interfere in the community's internal affairs. Other factors are, of course, at play. The Muslim intelligentsia is weak in quantitative as well as qualitative terms. It feels too insecure against the traditionalists in its own communities to be able to take up the cause of reform. But its central aspiration is to maintain its identity and this greatly influences its thinking and behaviour.

The two principal cultural traditions in India—Hindu and Muslim—are constantly reacting to the onslaught of modern western civilization with its emphasis on science, technology, rationality and so on, accepting and assimilating a part of its value system and rejecting a part of it. Both are being modified in the process in different degrees; neither is being superseded. But the more important point is that they are hardly reacting to one another. There is virtually no communication between them in any meaningful sense of the term. The educated Hindu and Muslim deal with each other on the basis of evasion and make-believe. Neither is trying to understand the difficulties, fears and hopes of the

other. Both pretend that their religion and past do not matter to them. In the face of the present grim reality it is pointless to discuss whether the two cultures had achieved a measure of fusion or synthesis in the past.

The Hindu is more self-assured than his Muslim counterpart because he belongs to the stronger community in terms of numbers, economic well-being, growth potential and modern education. The modern concept of territorial nationalism also favours him. He can accept and espouse this doctrine without any inhibition on reservation because it legitimises his search for a larger unity without in any way threatening his sense of distinct identity. The Muslim cannot do so for obvious reasons. Nationalism requires him to submerge his personality.

If this analysis is essentially valid it follows that the talk of 'Indianisation' is futile and irrelevant. So in a sense is the officially-sponsored and officially-endorsed concept of 'national integration' if it connotes anything more than the effective maintenance of law and order and non-discrimination against the Muslims. The rise of a common culture and frame of reference—social and ethical values and interpretation of history—is out of the question in the foreseeable future.

The aforesaid must not be represented as an endorsement of the two-nation theory. There was no 'fatal inevitability' about partition though it is difficult to believe that undivided India could have evolved a viable and coherent polity. The two-nation theory was highly vulnerable on the ground that the Muslims were not in occupation of contiguous territory except in the north-west and the east. It should have been obvious to the protagonists of Pakistan from the beginning that their struggle for a Muslim homeland would, if successful, lead only to the autonomy of those parts of the country where they

were in a majority. Perhaps they recognised this point. But they were so obsessed with the imaginary fear of Hindu domination that they did not worry about the consequences of their actions. In fact as matters stood it is not the Muslims but the Hindus with caste, linguistic and political divisions who would have found themselves in a weaker position in united India. All that the Muslim League had to do was to espouse the cause of scheduled castes and tribes and win them over to its side. The more pertinent fact is that the Muslims in what is now India ignored the reality of their dispersal.

**T**he two-nation theory was a strange and explosive mixture of truth and fantasy. It was true that the Hindus were moving towards nationhood as they were able to get rid of degenerate practices like *sati* and child marriage and debilitating superstitions and acquire modern knowledge. But before independence they had neither overcome the divisions in their ranks to be able to act cohesively nor succeeded in giving a fair deal to the scheduled castes and tribes. Their progress towards nationhood could have been delayed by an imaginative Muslim League leadership which was willing to compromise its demand for partition more or less on its own terms. In any case it was sheer fantasy for Jinnah to believe that he could convert the Muslim community into a nation by organising them under his leadership on anti-Hindu slogans. He could and did make them into a formidable political force. But he over-reached himself and converted glorious success into disastrous failure. Partition split the Muslim community into three pieces with more than one-third dispersed throughout the length and breadth of India.

Partition transformed the situation. The Hindus came to possess for the first time in a thousand years a State of their own which they could use to legislate social change, promote modernisation

and economic growth and to give the scheduled castes and tribes the hope of a fair deal in times to come and thereby move towards the consolidation of their nationhood. Partition also ended the veto that the Muslims had come to enjoy on the country's movement forward and vastly reduced their bargaining power. The community was put on the defensive because it had lent enthusiastic support to the demand for partition. All in all a situation unprecedented in over a thousand years arose as a result of developments in 1947.

Nehru did his very best to minimise the shock for the Muslim community. He fought against aggressive Hindu chauvinism—in this struggle he was greatly assisted by Gandhiji's martyrdom—and to an extent succeeded, in separating the issue of the future of Indian Muslims from demand for, and establishment of, Pakistan. He achieved a measure of success which was unbelievable in 1947 in that he was able to popularise the concept of secular nationalism and give the Muslims a sense of self-confidence. But the essential factors that will govern future developments in the country could not have been superseded by him.

**I**t follows that the Hindu and Muslim cultural streams will not merge to form one mainstream. This need not have been a cause of concern if there was no Pakistan or if Pakistan adopts a genuinely friendly approach towards this country. The existence of an aggressively hostile Pakistan stirs up Hindu chauvinism and attracts unfavourable attention to the Muslim community because it wishes to preserve its separate identity. But one need not be unduly depressed by this factor because three others offset it.

These three favourable factors from the Muslim community's point of view are the Hindus' natural proclivity for secular nationalism, commitment to democracy and the existence of the depressed classes with whom it can make common cause in a con-

tinuing and growing struggle for social equality, economic opportunity and a share in power.

The Hindus have never in the past established a theocratic State. They cannot do so now or in the future because they are not a people of the Book which means there is no central doctrine to which every member of the community must subscribe, and because they do not possess an ecclesiastical authority. Tolerance of other faiths is a matter of habit with them. Even if they wish, they cannot resort to heresy hunting because that will lead to their own destruction.

**T**he Hindu commitment to democracy *ipso facto* gives an opportunity to all other communities to participate in the political process. The effectiveness of this participation depends on a variety of factors—organisation, economic strength and education—but the opportunity is there for the Muslims as for anyone else. This is not a small matter and its importance will grow with the passage of time.

Finally, the Congress in the past has retained power largely with the support of the scheduled castes and the Muslims. The electoral importance of these communities will grow and not diminish in years to come.

The conclusion is inescapable that it is through the political process leading finally to the establishment of a political community that the Hindu-Muslim adjustment will take place. The process will of necessity be prolonged and painful. Frequent set-backs are inherent in it. Progress will be facilitated or hampered by the Hindus' sense of security or insecurity vis-a-vis Pakistan, economic growth or lack of it, political stability or absence of it and finally by the willingness or unwillingness of the Muslims to come to terms with their new status as a minority whose well-being is linked up inextricably with that of the country as a whole. While it will

not and need not give up its identity it will have to make adjustments like learning Hindi and other regional languages if it does not wish to isolate itself from the mainstream and deprive itself of the advantages of national growth. Again, the success or failure of this process of adjustment will depend on whether the Hindus are able or unable to eliminate discrimination against them, particularly in respect of employment.

It perhaps needs to be said in this context that this is the first time in the history of Indian Islam that the Muslims find themselves in a situation where they have to accept the status of a minority. For hundreds of years their co-religionists were the rulers and they shared in that reflected glory even if that did not mean very much for them in terms of economic benefits. Except for a brief period the Muslims enjoyed a privileged status under the British with the result that they avoided facing up to the fact that they were a minority. They necessarily find the change in their political status painful and they deeply resent it. This should not be misunderstood because no community with an awareness of its history can accept a change of this order easily. But the compulsion is remorseless and cannot be circumvented.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that the hope that the so-called industrial proletariat will show the way, has turned out to be wholly unfounded. The worst riots in India in recent years—Ranchi, Indore and Ahmedabad—have taken place among industrial workers. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to India. The industrial workers in the United States are more anti-Negro than white collar employees and in the United Kingdom they are enthusiastic supporters of Powellism, which represents an irrational aversion to Asian immigrants. This culturally most backward class cannot be the harbinger of a new dawn.

# Economic participation

ABAD AHMAD

THE problem of conflict between a majority and a minority is not peculiar to our country. Several other countries have similar problems, although the symbolic basis of such conflicts may take other forms, such as differences in race, colour of skin, language or culture. One common thread in most of these conflicts seems to be the struggle for scarce economic resources, jobs and political power. Very often the root cause for conflict is economic disparity but the surface motivations appear to be different.

In this paper I propose to examine the problem of communal conflict in our country mainly from an economic angle. It seems to me that economic disparities lead to educational and other disparities which ultimately widen the emotional gap between the communities and create explosive situations. It is on this front that constructive steps have to be started for long-term solutions to the problem. No doubt there are other important dimensions of the problem, such as distortion of history, lack of mutual trust, etc., which deserve to be discussed in their own right, but for the purpose of this paper I shall leave them out.

Before proceeding further, I would like to make the premises of my thinking explicit. The following are the main premises

on which I am basing my analysis.

- (a) Economic disparities lead to other disparities, such as educational, attitudinal, and cultural disparities.
- (b) Increasing disparities lead to greater differences of opinion and prejudices, and consequent conflicts.
- (c) An economically underprivileged and handicapped community leads to social instability.
- (d) In a democratic political set-up, a majority has a comparatively easier access and control over economic resources and jobs than the minority communities and, therefore, the majority community has a greater responsibility for protecting the interests of minority communities.
- (e) The only way for members of a minority community to find a worthwhile place in the economic set-up of a country is to develop competence through skills and knowledge which would be valued and demanded by the economy.
- (f) Greater economic participation of the minority communities broadens the economic base and widens the market potential which benefits the whole country.

**K**eeping the above premises in view, it becomes pertinent to examine whether the Muslim community, being the second largest community in our country, is keeping pace with the economic growth in the country? If it is failing to do so, how can it be motivated and helped to participate more actively in the economic mainstream? Unfortunately, facts are not available on these points. I shall, therefore, base my analysis on personal observations.

In order to assess the economic participation of the Muslim

community at present, and the trend in this matter, it may be worthwhile to examine the behaviour of Muslims in respect of their role in modern industry and trade, their participation in professional, vocational, and university education, the relative number of jobs held by them in government services, industrial and commercial enterprises, and the state of the localities where Muslims live predominantly.

**A** survey would probably reveal that the Muslim community has lagged behind in all the above stated spheres of life. In modern industry and trade, except for isolated instances, Muslims do not own large scale industry or business, and they have been traditionally aloof from banking and finance. No doubt there are some medium and small scale consumer goods enterprises which have been started and are owned by the Muslims, such as tanneries, tobacco firms, perfumeries, etc., but by and large Muslims have not demonstrated high entrepreneurial traits. They seem to be much less 'investment oriented' than several other communities. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Muslims enjoyed economic and social status mainly as landlords and through government services in the pre-independence period, and after independence when zamindari was abolished, very few of them could adjust to the new situation.

In the fields of professional, vocational, and university education the number of Muslims appears to be far lower than their relative percentage in the total population. Except in a few Muslim institutions, it is difficult to find Muslim students at the post-graduate level, particularly in professional courses. This can be due to several reasons including financial difficulties in pursuing higher education; but an important aspect of this picture

may be the lack of sufficient motivation for higher education.

**T**he relative number of jobs held by Muslims in government, industrial and commercial undertakings has been a bone of contention for a long time. There is a strong feeling among Muslims that this number has been steadily declining. Among several reasons, one important factor may also be the short supply of really competent candidates from the Muslim community. This fact has often been noted by persons who are on the selection boards.

Looking at the localities where Muslims live, one often finds a dismal picture. By and large, Muslims live in compact *mohallas*, which are relatively older, decadent and congested parts of the city. In these *mohallas* one can sense the feeling of despondency, hopelessness, and almost a static state of socio-economic life. Narrow and dirty lanes; small, dark and dingy shops containing visibly old and cheap stocks, some Unani medicine stores, banglewallahs, bakeries, meat shops, a number of hawkers selling food-stuff, etc., present a typical sight of the shopping areas of these *mohallas*. A large number of beggars and rikshaw pullers will also be frequently noted.

The Muslim mohalla is thus a virtual ghetto, or is on its way to becoming one in due course. It appears to me that behind the desire to live in such *mohallas* is the sense of security which they offer, vocational and social immobility of the Muslims, and the lack of ambition in many to improve their lot. This mode of living not only isolates but also insulates the Muslim community from the mainstream, and a 'closed system' develops in which the information, views and attitudes also become remoter from the realities and challenges of the time.

This tendency towards isolation can be traced to events as far

back as 1857. The decline and destruction of the Mughal empire was followed by pointed vengeance of Britishers towards Muslims because of which they were deliberately weakened economically and socially. Later, this policy was reversed and the Muslims also began to revive political activities through the Khilafat movement and became actively involved in the struggle for national freedom. At this stage they became victims of the divide and rule policy of the Britishers. The partition of the country and the creation of Pakistan made the position of Indian Muslims more difficult.

After partition, those Muslims who chose to stay in their motherland, had hoped that the wounds inflicted by the partition would heal in time and they would be able to live in harmony with the rest of the people in the country as they had been living together for centuries. This hope provided them the motivation to start small business, educate their children, compete for jobs, and they demonstrated a high sense of duty and loyalty to the nation in various services and during the war. This optimism, has, however, been dwindling ever since the communal riots have started becoming more persistent, more organized, and more ghastly. Under the stress of insecurity created by riots, the behaviour of Muslims resembles that of any frustrated person: viz. regression, fixation, aggression, resignation or escape. Of these, resignation, i.e., an attitude of giving up the struggle for improvement is most predominant. In short, alienation and isolation of the Muslim community have been increasing with such riots.

Another possible reason for the isolation of Muslims may be traced to the absence of progressive movements among the Muslims. Except for Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's efforts to acquaint Muslims with western education, the study of

science, and his persuasion to bring Muslim youth out of the 'shell' and take up responsible occupations and administrative positions, there has hardly been any significant progressive change. The Aligarh Muslim University founded by Sir Syed has been performing the role of an effective bridge between the isolated minority and the modern age in India, and has motivated Muslim youth to seek education in other universities of the country also. But the bulk of Muslims are still in the grip of conservative and reactionary leaders. The educated and progressive Muslims are also alienated from the Muslim masses, and the masses soon disown a leader who would propagate a progressive viewpoint. It is probably due to this phenomenon that great Muslim leaders like Maulana Azad and Dr. Zakir Husain could not create much impact on the Muslim masses.

In a way Muslims also become victims of 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. In a poor country like ours, where already the problems of unemployment, poverty, ignorance, and disease are gigantic, it is inevitable that jobs will be scarce and making a living will be very hard. Under such conditions, parochial loyalties to family, caste, religious community, provincial origin, and language take precedence over the needs of competence, complete objectivity and fairness in employment. This is a great obstacle in economic development, yet it persists with great force. This is obviously perceived by the minority members as discrimination against them. The demoralizing influence of such perception is that people give up the struggle to improve their competence. Consequently, whenever opportunity is available, they are left behind. Thus the 'self-fulfilling prophecy' comes true.

The foregoing analysis may help us in identifying some causes of the growing isolation of the minority community from the

economic, social and political life of the country. This trend is fraught with dangers for the future of the nation, as can be clearly seen from the cases of isolated minorities in other countries, like the USA. The negroes in America have become a highly insulated closed system and have been reduced to 'ghetto dwellers'. These ghettos are now like 'powder kegs' and race riots started from these ghettos have shaken the whole country. Americans have now realized that the real remedy for this trouble is the economic independence of minorities through jobs, entrepreneurship, investment and education. Various experiments all over the States, particularly such as in Detroit, Stanford, etc., are worthy of study in this respect because of their remarkable success.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now discuss some practical measures to remedy this situation. In this connection, I would like to stress that if the change has to be meaningful, it will have to come from within the Muslim community. Secondly, efforts have to be directed towards educational and economic uplift as the foundation for the acceptance of other changes. Thirdly, an environment of security and mutual trust will have to be provided to let the processes of change operate in a sustained manner. Keeping this framework as the overall strategy, I would like to suggest the following specific measures.

1. *Entrepreneurship*:\* In the long run a community cannot

1. Vide Aumente, J: 'Detroit Builds from the Ashes', in *Think*, Sept-October, 1969, Pp 15-17; and the report of the Stanford Graduate School of Business Bulletin, Fall 1969, entitled 'Arcata National Corp. Invests Risk Money to Develop Jobs, Capital, and Pride of Ownership for Minority Entrepreneurs', Pp 12-16.

\* In simplest terms, entrepreneurship means the risk of starting a new industrial or commercial venture through investment of one's own or borrowed capital.

grow on jobs alone. Self-employment through entrepreneurship is the answer not only to a community's growth, but to the whole nation's economic growth. For entrepreneurship, a high level of achievement motivation is needed, along with 'investment orientation'<sup>\*\*</sup> and credit facilities. David McClelland's researches in the USA as well as his work in India reveal that through training achievement motivation can be developed and it leads to more enterprising ventures. With the nationalization of banks and liberal credit policy for entrepreneurs, it should be possible for members of a minority to come forward and avail of such opportunities. Entrepreneurship not only provides income and employment, but also develops social interaction with a wide range of people of different communities. It also enhances the self-esteem of the people, which is the essence of responsible citizenship. Developing entrepreneurial attitudes must, therefore, be given top priority in educational programmes.

**T**here is also need for agencies which can provide information regarding opportunities of profitable investment, and provide some technical and managerial help in the initial stages to overcome the difficulties in starting a new venture. In the USA some private companies have taken up this work and they also provide finances in addition to technical and managerial help to the minorities and such ventures have been quite successful.<sup>2</sup>

**2. Modern Management Concepts:** Muslims do possess skills of craftsmanship, but they lack the ability to organize and plan the enterprise on modern lines. For example, Muslim craftsmen are famous for lock-making, zari

work, carpet weaving, etc., but because they do not have good organizations their earnings are low and the middle-man takes away the cream of the value created from their work. Also, such crafts are not able to face competition by organized industries when they enter such fields.

**T**hus, awareness of modern management, concepts of planning, organization, coordination and control, incentive systems, fact-based decision making, analytical ability to solve business problems, techniques of financial and investment management, management accounting, and market orientation are some of the key concepts, awareness of which can pay rich dividends. It is surprising to note that in spite of a great upsurge of awareness of the importance of management education, Muslims have not come forward to avail of this new discipline.

**3. Joint cooperative ventures:** One possibility of developing mutual understanding and joint interest in enterprises is through encouragement of jointly owned cooperative ventures in which members of several communities share ownership. This will at least enable a greater sharing of views and responsibility which is often a significant beginning of mutual understanding. It has been noted that during riots, people working together have protected their co-workers because of long standing relationships.

**4. Education and Training.** Without upgrading education, vocational and professional skills, there is hardly any hope of any economic improvement of minorities. Members of a minority have also to realize this fact and give great emphasis to modern education for their children. For this purpose scholarships, loans, and grants have to be established by the community itself. It is unfortunate that huge amounts of money of *waqfs* is seldom utilized for such purposes. A considerable amount of money is also raised for gla-

morous causes such as the Ghalib Centenary, but needy students and institutions can hardly find funds for education. The Muslim community needs another Sir Syed now.

**5. Research in the community's economic problems.** There is also need of systematic and empirical research in the economic problems of a minority community. Such research should be directed at finding out the choice of vocations and professions, difficulties encountered in economic activities, attitudes and beliefs which inhibit progress, and the abilities and skills which can be further enhanced to help in the economic improvement of the community.

**I**n conclusion it may be restated that the Muslim community has not been keeping pace with the economic and educational progress in the country. During the last century it has been going through experiences which have made it withdraw and isolate itself from the mainstream of the economic and social life of the country. Partly, this isolation is caused by lack of any progressive leadership in the community. This trend towards isolation and insulation from the mainstream of life is likely to increase the gap between the majority and minority and is undesirable in the long term interest of the nation.

To remedy this situation economic and educational measures must be given top priority. Economic improvement of minorities would lead to greater mutual understanding and trust and responsible citizenship which are essential for social stability and economic growth of the country. The primary motivation for this change has to come from within the minority community and educated Muslims will have to take a more active role in this matter. For this process to become effective, an atmosphere of security and mutual trust is essential, in which the responsible members of the majority and the government have to play a vital role.

2. Arcata National Corp., Ibid.

<sup>\*\*</sup>By 'investment orientation', I mean the ability of a person to see the potentiality of saved money to earn further through investment, rather than to view it as stored wealth for consumption in future.

# Identity

NEJATULLAH SIDDIQI

THE basic aspirations of an average Indian Muslim should not, and I think do not, differ much from those of the average Hindu. Both like to see the country develop and prosper with due share in the fruits of progress accruing to him and his community. They would also like to enjoy the material fruits of development in an atmosphere of freedom—of conscience, of expression, of political organisation and of culture. Any doubts as to the incompatibility of a multi-cultural society with the nation State are as ill-founded as doubts regarding the advisability of linguistic freedom in a country like India. If, at all, it is the out-moded concept of the nation State that needs modification with a view to bringing it in harmony with the approaching one-world human society.

If the above is true, why should the national scene be marred with so much strife and violence? The question is especially pertinent in view of the fact that such strife retards the fulfilment of the basic aspiration of all Indians irrespective of their communal affiliations. The root of evil seems to lie in a fear psychosis generated by imaginary threats to the fulfilment of one's own aspirations from similar aspirations of others. This affliction is peculiar to a section of the majority community. It is further accentuated by the exaggerated notions of an exclusive right to these aspirations in the context of the immediate past of the history of free India.

One does not find such fears, or the aggravating wrong notions of an exclusive claim to wealth, power, and cultural supremacy among the Indian Muslims. Their

articulations do not indicate so. The very past which is seemingly the source of these wrong notions in some heads rules out any effective permeation of such ideas amongst Muslims. Fear they have, but of an entirely different nature. It is a fear of cultural suppression and even of physical annihilation generated by what appears to be a very exaggerated assessment of the threat from the above-mentioned attitude of a section of the majority community.

The idea that Muslims remain content with a second place in the polity of India after they have carved out a separate State in the Indian sub-continent is not, however, the exclusive property of the R.S.S. and the Jana Sangh, only. In different degrees, from aggressive articulation to tacit assumption, it runs through almost all shades of opinion in this country. Even the most liberal amongst the majority community who abhor any idea of discrimination between the citizens of India on any basis, including that of religion, would like the Muslims to make due allowance for the 'historical' fact of partition. This ill-conceived lesson of history has not failed to impress some Muslim intellectuals too.

Does India stand to lose if this idea is discarded? Can she make sustained real progress with this idea affecting the status of one-eighth of her population and inhibiting their initiatives? My own answer is an emphatic no. Until a frank debate on this issue convinces all concerned on the absurdity of this idea there is no escape from the sad experiences of the last 22 years. One is inclined to be hopeful as to the outcome of



this debate because of one's faith in the sanity of human beings. And also because important sections in the majority community realise the truth. They know that the idea is essentially unjust, rooted in falsehood and would lead to nothing but doom. They can be easily made vocal to pronounce that a country with seventy million frustrated citizens cannot make any real progress. Once the hollowness and futility of the chauvinistic posture of the R.S.S. brand of Hindu assertiveness is fully exposed, energies can be diverted from imaginary threats to the real dangers to progress—to ignorance, sloth, moral degeneration and spiritual confusion.

**A**llowed the fullest freedom of religious and cultural self expression and freed of all inhibitions in political activities, Muslims cannot do anything in this country without carrying along with them sizeable sections of the Hindus. That is one thing that the democratic procedure ensures. That covers all that really counts on the national scale—economic development, the ways of ensuring social justice (or implementing 'socialist' policies, if one likes to put it that way), defence and internal security, and stability. On lesser counts nobody, certainly not the Hindu, stands to lose anything if the Muslims are allowed to shape their family laws according to the dictates of their own conscience. If the Urdu language is treated justly it will serve the cause of progress by enabling millions of Indians a fuller expression of their genius. Those in majority can have their way in the policy making bodies, then they can always count on reason and persuasion in convincing sizeable sections of the Muslim community on any specific proposal. Normally each issue can be debated on its own merits once the inhibiting circumstances rendering the largest minority inarticulate are removed. Those which might be of special significance in view of the religious or cultural susceptibilities of a minority can also be far more

easily handled in a freer atmosphere. As it is, suspicion born out of fear distorts most of the debates, as far as there is any debate!

It is true that a fear of loss of identity stands in the way of reforms in some aspects of Muslim living. Reforms cannot however be bulldozed by the machinery of law or injected by the modernising secularists. It has to be acceptable to the community. It can come from within the community itself once the real obstacles to a forward looking attitude are removed—cultural freedom and equal share in the economic and political life of the country are needed to reassure the community and give it the self confidence it has all but lost. Once it feels steady and sure of itself it can muster the ability to maintain its individuality in a developing, dynamic living. As it is, any disturbance of the status quo is seen as a potential threat to its identity. This coupled with the continued educational backwardness with the consequent economic backwardness have left the Muslims engrossed in an inward-backward withdrawal.

**A**n outward-onward movement of the community will not, however, come as a byproduct of the removal of the external threats and the consequent inhibitions. The predicament of Indian Muslims today is a challenge to the Muslim intellectual. No amount of constitutional safeguards and liberal dispensation of justice in governmental policies can fill the role that only a Muslim leadership can play in the life of the community. The new leadership that intellectuals are called upon to provide must be blessed by a positive role. Unless such a role replaces the present defensive, and therefore essentially limited role that Muslim leadership has devised for itself, one should not expect any effective release of energy from within the community.

The removal of obstacles like communal aggression, linguistic

suppression, and discrimination in economic and political life is only a pre-condition to the advancement of the community. Necessary as it is, it alone cannot secure progress. The big transition from ignorance to knowledge, from sloth to enterprise, from corruption to honesty and from morbidity to spiritual purity and clarity require gigantic efforts matched only by their results.

**T**he positive role that the Muslim intellectuals have to discover, define and 'sell' to their masses must have two characteristics to be acceptable to the community, the country and humanity at large. It must have its roots in Islam and it must be thoroughly Indian. There is no conflict involved. But the only acceptable notion of being Indian is one which is in harmony with the essential oneness of mankind, and the world we live in. This does not refer only to the elimination of distances and the sharing of a common technology. In vital matters of peace, freedom and the eradication of poverty the interests of mankind today are inextricably inter-dependent despite national boundaries.

Unfortunately, ignorance about Islam coupled with the irreligious bias inherited from the West make the elite in India suspicious the moment Islam is mentioned in the context of a programme for Indian Muslims. They would like the Indian Muslims to carve out a role in the national life which keeps out Islam, which should rightfully belong to their conception of being an 'Indian'. This is not the place to argue why Muslims can never accept this dispensation. For one thing, they do not see a dichotomy between belonging to a country and having a world-outlook which guides them with a set of values. To them it seems ridiculous to shun these values in those very affairs of life in which they are most needed. It suits their genius to be guided by these same values in all their actions. Any imposed

schism is sure to create a split personality incapable of great deeds.

**T**he fault does not lie with the Muslim attitude which is natural and logical. It is the modern secularist seeing Islam in the western cast of religion who is to blame. The tendency to dub any projection of Islamic values in social, political or economic affairs as 'obscurantism, revivalism and medievalism' is the outcome of a pathetic failure to see what is quite obvious: that Islam is an entity entirely different from any religion the West has experienced. Let there be an objective study of the world-view and the values that form the basis of the Islamic *shariat* without any preconceived notions regarding what Islam, as a religion, should be. A study of this kind will reveal the utterly illogical, unnatural and impossible nature of demands that the spate of secularist prescriptions for Indian Muslims are presently making. It will also allay the baseless fears regarding the consequences of bringing Islam to bear upon the political and 'secular' affairs of the nation.

The Islamic roots of the Muslim community can, once the community is freed of the exhausting demands of self preservation, give it a clear sense of purpose, liberating vast energies and harnessing these to the service of the Indian society. The message of Islam with its simple spirituality, realistic ethics and egalitarian socioeconomic overtones is best suited for entering into the core of any plan for all sided growth and development that India may seriously adopt in the saner days to come. The ill-digested and in themselves unbalanced western ideologies have failed to evoke any warm response from the Indian masses. Hence the age old self-centredness, parochialism and conceit beneath the veneer of the high sounding talks of socialism and modernisation.

Ours is still a society in which the minds of men are riddled by a very involved world-outlook.

They entertain narrow, sectarian ethical standards. Man's attitude towards fellow men is hardly above that of animals whose sympathies are confined to their respective herds. No wonder the fruits of progress are eluding all but few, and even acquiring modern education and wealth fails to ensure social equality to those supposed to be condemned by their birth. Such is the *modus operandi* of our society. Efforts to change it from without, by giving it steel mills, dams and mechanised agriculture cannot succeed. They make the rich richer, give more power to the powerful and increase the arrogance of the high and mighty in the society. Socialisation by law can at best create a 'new class' as it has done elsewhere. Sermonisation by the arch sinners has never won any converts.

**A** change of hearts and minds is the need of the hour. It is imperative if we are to develop in a way that would avoid the pitfalls which the developed countries of the world are now lamenting they failed to avoid. The spiritual vacuum and the loss of values; the forsaken homes and the unsafe streets; the alien generations and the uneasy conscience are haunting the societies in the developed areas of the globe. Must we adopt a course which will lead us to the same, as we develop? Or shall we forestall the evil by adopting a more balanced approach to progress that gives due importance to spiritual and moral aspects of life along with material development?

That is the task to which we Indians have to address ourselves once we rise above the fads and feuds which divert our attention from the real issues. It is in this task that Muslims can find in true Islam a source of guidance as well as inspiration. For, to be a Muslim is to work on a mission in one's society. This regenerative mission relates to the welfare of all men and is not subservient to the interest of Muslims alone. The sense of a mission that re-

lates to all instead of their community alone, the realisation that their community is not defined by a set of worldly interests, economic, political, linguistic or even cultural in the narrow sense, but by this mission itself; and the conviction that in living up to the teachings of Islam and presenting its message to fellow countrymen they would be doing the most singular service that the servants of God can do to His people, will raise the Muslim community from the morass that it is caught into. For, I have no hesitation to say, we as a community are a decadent people. We do not live up to our faith, thus corrupting its image in the sight of our countrymen. We do not work hard but blame others for our ills. Our mores and manners are far removed from the ethical standards set for us and we worship as many false gods as our minds can conjure up. Once the community looks up to its Sustainer and rediscovers its purpose on earth, the will to help itself and serve others as enjoined upon the *ummah* will not be lagging behind.

**T**alking of a positive role in the national life may seem ridiculous while the scars of the Gujarat riots are still fresh. But it is in such trying times that people awake from slumber, mobilise their intellectual and spiritual energies and rededicate themselves to historic missions. It is a difficult job to save one's life, honour and property and at the same time be sane enough to enter into a fruitful dialogue with 'others'—from out of whose ranks the aggressors unfortunately succeed in drawing their armies. But this precisely is the immediate task before the Muslim intellectuals. Those who undertake it will require the composure, the self-confidence, the sympathy and the faith in humanity, and the dedication to their mission which the Prophet and his followers demonstrated in Mecca. That presupposes a clear mind, a pure heart and an iron will. Will the Muslim intellectual show these?

# Social profile

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NO attempt will be made in this paper to establish any cause and effect relationship between any particular facets of the social profile of Ahmedabad on the one hand and the tragic happenings of last September-October on the other. What will be attempted here, is to highlight the interplay of some of the socio-economic forces, that might have contributed to the creation of a congenial atmosphere for the virus of communal tension and hatred to flourish.

Underlying the present attempt are the following assumptions.

1. While some immediate provocation might have trigger-

ed the break-out of events, what is really important is the existence of the social explosives underneath.

2. In a community where power structure and distribution of community facilities are not in conformity with the emerging social values, blind alleys in social communication are likely to come into existence. In such a situation attempts would be made by the vested interests at various levels, to by-pass the communication blockade by harping on alternative sets of traditional values. In this process, the more basic

human values would tend to be destroyed.

3. Communal tension is more likely to take place in an area where there are multiple foci of tension and where the agencies for neutralising the other foci of tension are stronger than those for neutralising the communal tensions. In fact in such a situation, all other tensions may be harnessed to feed the communal tension.
4. Whoever might have pulled the trigger, once the inhibition against violence is broken, some people may see in its continuation an opportunity to establish or stabilise a new pattern of social relationship which is advantageous to them. Again, some, who have vested interests in preserving certain aspects of the old pattern of relationship, (which might be under some threat otherwise), might see in the continuation of the tension an opportunity to play their own game, through diversionary tactics.

In the light of these assumptions, the relevant demographic and social data would be examined here.

The city has developed on both sides of the river 'Sabarmati'. The eastern side has centuries old walled city; all industries of the town, all main terminals of the railway, State transport and local buses, wholesale market, commerce, trade and shipping areas are also situated on this side. All these activities are mixed up with the residential areas and there is great chaos. About 80% of the total population of the city live on this side of the river. Except for Sahi Bag and some areas around Kankari Lake, the general deterioration of environment is widespread.

The western side is newly developed. There are open spaces; educational and other institutions and thinly populated residential areas. By and large, the eastern

side is inhabited by the working class people and the western side by the employers.

Due to this pattern of growth, every morning a large number of people are required to move from the eastern side to the western side to their places of employment or centres of education and every evening there is a movement in the reverse direction. Thus, there is an oscillating movement of a large number of the population on all working days.

The environmental disparities between the eastern side and the western side is staggering. The road length per capita within the eastern side is a fraction of the road length on the western side. Water consumption on the western side is almost three times as high per capita.

The western side of the city looks like a garden suburbia; the eastern side is a terribly overcrowded structurally decayed ghetto. The city has slums where the most elementary traditions of municipal service are absent.

The benefits of urban expansion have gone to a few individuals who are speculators in land

development comes out as a stark reality. For instance, density per acre varies from 5 in Behrampur to 561 in Kharia II. Number of persons per room varies from 2.02 in Kharia III to 9.08 in Jamalpur I. Percentage of literacy varies from 36.11 in Behrampur to 79.34 in Kharia III. Percentage of workers to total population varies from 25.31 in Kharia II to 55.60 in Railwaypura and 36.52 in Asarva.

The haphazard growth is not confined to Ahmedabad city only, it is found in the surrounding areas also. At present the State Government has made a policy that no major industry should be permitted within 15 miles of Ahmedabad in order to avoid industrial concentration at Ahmedabad. As a result of this *ad hoc* decision, industries are being located in a dispersed manner at other places.

Another dimension of the stagnation in the city life comes out when the distribution of the workers by broad industrial categories in Ahmedabad is compared to that in a few other cities. A comparative statement in this matter is furnished below:

Name of the City	The Percentage of total workers			Transport and Storage	Other services
	Agriculture	Production other than agriculture	Commerce		
Ahmedabad	0.50	56.0	15.7	5.8	22.0
Kanpur	3.50	40.8	18.0	8.0	29.7
Coimbatore	1.50	44.2	19.3	5.7	24.3
Bangalore	6.70	41.4	12.5	5.0	34.4

and this seems to have been possible because of sheer callousness. For instance, where the local authority declared Asram Road area as a commercial area, a few years back without taking adequate care to control land speculation, the land value increased four to five times.

If considered wardwise, the disparity in the condition of living and the level of socio-cultural

In Ahmedabad the fact that the other services sector is the smallest among the cities in spite of the fact that it became the State-Headquarters in 1960 shows that the large industrial sector has not been able to influence commerce and the other services sector to the same extent as in case of the other cities compared here.

If the numerical strength of the major religious communities in

Ahmedabad city during 1901 to 1961 is examined, it is found that whereas in 1941 the population in Ahmedabad was about 6 lakhs; in 1961 it was about 11½ lakhs. An estimation made by the Town Planning Organisation shows that at present the population is about 15 lakhs. It is significant to note that during the successive Censuses starting from 1931, the proportion of the Muslims in the city has gone down considerably. In 1931 they constituted 26.84% of the total population. In 1961 their total population was 1,78,398 and they constituted 15.51% of the total population.

**M**uch of the growth of population in the city is accounted for by large scale migration. In 1961, 50.82% of the total population were migrants. If the migrants in the age-group 0-14 are overlooked the migrants in the other age-group constitute 64.58% to 73.03% of the total population of the respective age groups. If the Hindu and Muslim migrants are considered separately, it is found that the Hindu migrants constitute 54.20% of the total Hindu population in the city. The corresponding figure for the Muslim migrants is 35.37%. One significant difference between the Hindu and Muslim migrants is that whereas the overwhelming majority of the Hindu migrants are from the different areas of the State, in the case of the Muslims, the overwhelming majority are from other States including Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and the Union Territories. It is also interesting to note that compared to the Hindus, a proportionately larger number of Muslim migrants are from urban areas.

A study of the census data on migrants and non-migrants in selected occupations shows that except for the occupations of directors, managers, working proprietors, financial institutions, office machine operators, com-

merce, manufacturer and travelling agents, money-lenders and brokers in other selected occupations, the migrants constituted the majority of the working force in 1961. Among the occupations dominated by the migrants, mention may be made of architects, surveyors, engineers, chemists, physicians, surgeons, dentists, nurses, teachers, jurists, social-scientists, artists, writers, administrators and executive officials, etc.

Out of 11,49,918 persons in the city, 8,05,126 are Gujarati speaking (70.01%). Among the other important languages are Urdu (1,48,515 speakers or 12.83% of the total population), Hindi (91,522 or 7.96% of the total population), Marathi (38,578 or 3.35% of the total population). It can be assumed that the bulk of the Urdu speakers are Muslims. Here it is to be noted that out of 1,48,515 Urdu speakers, 38,860 persons (26.17%) speak a language subsidiary to the mother-tongue. This low proportion of bilingualism seems to be an index of the lack of extensive and intensive interaction between the Urdu speakers and others in the city. This also gives another dimension to the communal tangle. There is an inter-linkage of religious difference and linguistic difference in the Hindu-Muslim relations in the city.

**T**he foregoing data show that there are many focal points of tension and conflict in the city life of Ahmedabad. The question now arises why rather than the underlying tensions manifesting themselves in terms of class conflict or conflict of economic or occupational interests, they come out to the surface along the traditional channel of communal disturbance. In this matter an insight about the grip of traditionalism which might have conditioned the political and social philosophy of the people would be of some use.

An analysis of the occupational mix of the city seems to suggest

the existence of a proportionately low number of persons engaged in liberal professions like labour and social welfare workers, administrators, executive and managerial workers, physicians, teachers and social scientists, etc.

These categories of workers are not only necessary for rendering certain community services, they are also generally the holders of liberal values in a secular democracy. Their small proportion is an index, not only of the weakness of the economic structure of the city but also of stunted growth towards modernisation. In this connection, attention may be drawn to one important index of traditionalism in the city. While there are 620 physicians and surgeons, there are as many as 318 Ayurvedic physicians. In a modern city this high proportion of Ayurvedic physicians is not normally expected.

**A**nother index of traditionalism, is the existence of pols or recognised neighbourhoods as more or less corporate social entities bound by moral obligations. When outsiders settle in those pols, they are considered to be trespassers. In one mixed locality where Hindu Vagris and Muslims live side by side and where communal disturbance had taken place, one of the grudges of the Hindus against the Muslims appears to be that the latter had intruded into the almost closed area where the Hindus were living for generations.

The recent communal disturbance broke out on September 18. It, however, appears that before that for some months tension was mounting. Besides it is to be mentioned that communal disturbances are not new to Ahmedabad. There was disturbance in 1941 and again in 1946. But whereas the earlier disturbances took place within the walled city among the old inhabitants, the recent disturbances mostly took place on the

eastern bank of the river, particularly in the wards with low literacy, as well as in the growing slums and industrial areas. It seems that the blighted areas within the walled city with their loaded history and ancient decadent aristocracy have served as generating centres of tension, but the violent incidents have taken place more in the outlying areas, containing industrial areas with a slum population.

It is significant to note that compared to the number of persons killed, the number of injured is not very high. Another significant fact is that the number of cases of arson and looting reached the peak on September 20, whereas the number of cases of killing and firing retained the momentum even on September 21. It is also significant that in the areas of absolute majority of any of the communities, there were less number of incidents. It, therefore, seems that in most of the areas where incidents took place, both the majority and the minority communities considered their security at threat. Their aggressive behaviour might be only a dimension of their hypothetical self-defence.

Another very important fact to be kept in view is that in a very large number of cases the Hindu labourers, particularly the scheduled caste labourers, and the Muslim labourers were poised against one another. It is reported that even the labourers of the two communities hailing from the same place did not hesitate in killing one another.

On the face of this great human tragedy, the social research cannot be confined to academic interest only. It must aim at helping the restoration of normalcy and strengthening the forces of peace and harmony. The areas of analysis should be selected in such a manner as to provide insights and informations of immediate application value to the action agencies. Thus after the strong foundation of collaboration

between social science and social action agencies in this field has been laid down, areas of analysis can be taken up covering problems which will require treatment over a longer span of time.

With this perspective in view, it seems that some of the problem areas should receive second priority in social analysis. For instance the role of political ideology or of political organisations in creating or perpetuating tension, the role of the various mass media in aggravating the situation or the historical relations of the Hindus and the Muslims starting from the first invasion of India by the Arabs to the traumatic experience of the country in 1947 should belong to this category. On the other hand, identification of economic forces, if any, which might have arrayed the Hindu and Muslim workers in an antagonistic relationship and also of the vested interests, if any, which might be impeding at present the restoration of normalcy and peace should receive higher priority. The problem of involving the intelligentsia in the healthy development of the community life in the city and of motivating the younger people to take up an active role for saving the values of civilisation when the community is threatened by barbaric action on a massive scale, should also receive comparatively high priority. In the light of the above statement of priority, the antagonistic economic interest, if any, of the Hindu and Muslim workers in Ahmedabad would be examined.

In 1961 the number of textile mills in the city was 71. In 1962-63, 1,44,934 workers were on register, out of them 1,35,206 were permanent and 9,728 were temporary.

It is obvious that the textile industry plays a crucial role in the economic and employment

structure of the city. It is therefore desirable to have a closer look at the textile industry to find out whether the economy is in a sound condition and whether in its organisation there are ramifications of the traditional social structure, in which case tensions within the industry may also be channelised along traditional lines.

In December 1967, the Gujarat Government had appointed a Textile Re-organisation Committee under the Chairmanship of Manubhai Shah, former Commerce Minister, Government of India. The Committee in its report brought out the unsound condition of the industry and suggested the reasons for the same.

While the millowners dispute the charge of inefficient management, the question of technological lag is generally admitted. During the last few years, 7 mills in Ahmedabad were closed down and about 17,000 workers were thrown out of employment. Though later on 4 mills have restarted and about 10,000 workers have been taken back, the crisis of the industry seems to continue.

In this crisis, the Hindu and Muslim workers are not unlikely to have been affected unequally. One of the reasons for the same is that the textile industry in Ahmedabad is very much influenced by the traditional social structure. As mentioned in the report of the Ahmedabad Mill Owners' Association, 1967, 'with the gradual evolution of the Textile Mill Industry in this centre over a period of more than a century, there has arisen certain monopolistic tendency among workers, with the result that certain departments and/or sections of departments in the mills have been manned more or less wholly by workers belonging to a particular caste or community. Such a development took place because of the fact that when the industry was first started in this centre, the recruits at the initial stage were naturally drawn from the

\*Another reason why at the first stage of investigation more attention has been given to industrial relation is the fact that in recent years most of the riots have taken place in the industrial areas.

caste and community which was already working in similar occupations e.g., the spinners were recruited from Harijan, inhabitants of North Gujarat who were hereditary handloom weavers, while the winders and weavers were mostly drawn from the local Muslim community of handloom weavers. Gradually this process took the form of a rigid monopoly—Ring Spinning Section for the Harijans and weaving for the Muslims—and continued thereafter, though at a later stage weaving has been taken up as occupation by non-Muslim communities and in a number of cases there is a preponderance of non-Muslim weavers over the Muslim weavers.

'Today there is no bar to any worker to secure employment in any department of a mill but there is always some reluctance on the part of, say, a Harijan, to join as a weaver when offered such a job. The position on the whole has much improved and with social progress there has been an infusion of different castes and communities in a number of departments.' Though the position of monopoly has tended to be slackened to some extent, there are still a few departments in addition to those mentioned above, where the various castes and communities have virtual monopoly. For instance, in dyeing and printing, the Muslims have the dominant control.

In weaving, though there are a good number of Harijan workers it is reported that their skill is more limited to coarse weaving. In view of the crisis in the textile industry and also in view of the fact that the textile mills in Ahmedabad are switching over to finer count weaving, it seems that the Harijan workers are faced with greater degree of insecurity than the Muslim workers.

It seems that there is also some scope for generation of tension in the fresh recruitment of the labourers. As mentioned in the report of the Ahmedabad Mill-owners' Association, in the textile

industry in Ahmedabad the recruitment of labour had been carried out through Jobbers (also called Mucadams) and it continues even today.

With the introduction of the Decasualisation Scheme, the traditional method of recruitment through Mucadams has been affected to some extent. It seems that it impinges on the traditional vested interests, causing disaffection, and only through a perpetual war of nerves and compromises, the scheme operates.

There is another field of conflicting interests among the different categories of workers, namely the wage structure. As mentioned in the annual report of the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1967 'The occupational wages on different categories of employees in Ahmedabad Cotton Textile Mills were standardised in 1948 by the Industrial Court, Bombay, under its award on the recommendation of the assessor appointed by Court. The wage scales recommended by the assessor for different occupations were based on ad hoc basis and not on scientific basis as given in the Fair Wages Committee Report which was published later. It is understood that the Ahmedabad Mill Owners' Association being anxious to put the whole wage scheme on a scientific basis by proper assessment of workload and job analysis on basis of various factors like skill, physical strain, hazard, fatigue, etc., engaged a firm of industrial engineers to prepare a rational and scientific scheme of wages for Ahmedabad Mill Employees at substantial cost and submitted the expert's report to the Industrial Court to help it in this behalf. The court, though, fully sympathetic to the employer's desire to evolve a scientific wage scheme, could not take into consideration the expert's report due to restricted nature of its terms of reference and particularly because of the vehement opposition of the Re-

presentative Labour Unions. Thus a great opportunity was lost and wage differentials of Mill-employees in Ahmedabad continue to retain their unscientific nature.'

As mentioned earlier, there is a virtual community-wise monopoly of the different departments. It, therefore, appears that the operational units of the trade union are also based on castes and communities. One of the reasons for the reluctance of the Trade Union to open the question of re-examining the wage differentials among the different occupations may be that it would lead to tensions along caste and community lines.

In view of the fact that the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association is one of the most well organised trade unions in the country with a long tradition, and also in view of the fact that the Bombay Industrial Regulation Act which is in operation in Gujarat recognises only one trade union, the interests which might feel to be adversely affected by this particular stand of the union would hardly have any chance to assert their right. It is significant to note that a few years ago the Muslim labourers engaged in the Warping Section had organised a separate union of their own called Ahmedabad Sarani Kamdar Mandal, but this rival trade union could not operate successfully and has become almost defunct by this time.

From the report of the Textile Labour Association, 1963-64, it is found that their membership went down by 11,622 during 1962-63 to 1963-64. The largest number of defections had taken place in the Weaving Section where the Muslims are predominant. It therefore appears that the antagonistic relation of the Muslim and other workers was reflected to some extent even in the trade union membership for some time. The exact position at this moment is not definitely known. But it would not be surprising if inter-sectional rivalry among the workers failing to be sorted out through

open conflicts and democratic processes, on the platform of the trade union, which has almost a monolithic structure, with a highly organised bureaucracy, and which maintains almost a paternalistic hold over the workers because of the dedicated services of its leaders, had gone underground, became petrified and came out in a vicious form.

**F**or understanding the interplay of the socio-economic forces contributing to the continuation of the tension, the vested interests impeding the restoration of normalcy are to be identified. It has been found that two economic interests are impeding the restoration of normalcy. One is constituted by the owners of the small-scale industries, the other is by the owners of the lands on which the hutments destroyed or damaged during the riot are situated.

It has been reported that the owners of the small-scale industries are refusing to re-employ the Muslim workers who were ousted from their positions during the riot. This requires an understanding of the state of economy of the small-scale industries in Ahmedabad. As mentioned earlier, their number has gone up considerably during the last few years. But it is not certain that this growth is the result of expansion of the economic base of the city. It is reported that the entrepreneurs of many of these small-scale industries were having their establishments in Maharashtra and other States. With the growing troubles of the textile industry in Maharashtra also, as well as the pressure exercised by the Shiv Sena and other parochial political forces in that State, they transferred their capital to Gujarat. The State Government gave them encouragement in the form of various concessions and credit facilities. But because of the crisis of the textile industry, they could not establish themselves on sound footing.

and Industry, 1967 throws further light. 'The Textile Machinery manufacturing, which is totally dependent on the Textile Industry, has also suffered heavily. It was progressing at a very satisfactory rate and had come to such a stage of development, that our dependence on foreign suppliers was reduced considerably. The fact that it also had ventured in the field of export was a matter of great pride and satisfaction to all of us. At such a juncture, it has faced the present recession. It is now undergoing a tremendous strain and it is helplessly struggling to survive. The Textile Industry is not in a position to undertake any major scheme of modernisation, in view of its financial difficulties, and this situation is not likely to improve in the immediate future unless financial assistance is forthcoming from Government quarters. The same is the fate of Chemical and ancillary industries which are dependent on the Textile Industry. Thus the present crisis in the Textile Industry has cast its shadow on many other industries.' The above seems to explain the reluctance of the owners of ancillary industries to continue the Muslim labourers under their employment.

**T**he land owners also are taking advantage of the present situation. In many cases they are resisting the reconstruction of the huts damaged or destroyed during the riot. It is reported that in some cases where they have allowed such reconstruction they are charging rents at enhanced rates.

The mention of the above vested interests should not be construed to mean that they were responsible for engineering the riot. But it is to be visualised that once the disturbance started, some of them would see their advantage in its continuation and to that extent the will of the community to stand strongly against the barbaric actions of the anti-social elements could have been diluted.

In this matter the report of the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce



# Books

MUSLIM POLITICS IN INDIA: By Hamid

Dalwai, Nachiketa Publications, 1969

Both the author and his patron, A. B. Shah, claim to be democrats, opposed to all forms of totalitarianism. Yet the kind of intolerant attitude towards the Indian Muslim 'communalists' advocated in this book could find supporters among the protagonists of totalitarianism only. No respectable Communist or bourgeois would like to associate himself with the scheme of forcible secularisation of the Indian Muslims advocated in this book. A democrat can hardly imagine any such thing. This fully explains the great popularity of the book in the Jana Sangh circles and the adverse criticism it has received in almost all the nationalist journals.

Just to have some idea of the kind of 'the angry young secularist' that Dalwai is, it would be enough to have a look at the introduction by one of his ardent admirers, Dilip Chitre. Chitre reports (on page 102) that 'At one of his public meetings at Sholapur, he said that if he were in power, he would compel all Muslims to shave off their beards.'

It may not be easy for all those who believe in secularism as well as democracy to agree with such rough and ready means of secularising the Indian Muslims. Such unthinking pleas could be offered only by a protagonist of dictatorship and its only effect could be either to frighten or enrage not only the Muslims but all other minority communities in India.

Indeed Prof. Shah considers the Gandhians, the Marxists and the modernist Muslims equally guilty of encouraging Muslim obscurantism. None except Dalwai has, in his opinion, the courage to undertake the difficult task to secularise and modernise the Indian Muslims.

And how is this Prophet of modernism going to accomplish the difficult task undertaken by him? Having traced the history of Hindu-Muslim discord in India in a pseudo-intellectual manner and declared that the total absence of a critical faculty and the prevalence of blind dogmatism and irrationalism among all sections of Indian Muslims—Mullahs, modernists, or Marxists—is the 'chief obstacle in the way of national integration', Dalwai has this to say about the Muslims who remained in India after the partition:

'Muslims in India agreed to remain in India as hostages in accordance with the theory propounded by the Muslim League. Why should Indian Muslims complain about it now? Do they say now that this entire theory was wrong? No, their only complaint is that Hindus have started implementing the theory.'

Not only this, Dalwai has also reached the conclusion that the Indian Muslims are also incapable of

seeing the wrong done by Pakistan to its Hindu nationals (or hostages?). Thus they would like to have the best of all the worlds.

Dalwai seems to be clearly suggesting that instead of complaining of the wrongs being done to them in their own country (where, according to Dalwai, they have agreed to live as hostages), the Indian Muslims should loudly—and perhaps continually—protest against the wrongs being done to the Hindus of Pakistan. What else can a hostage do to save his skin?

In fact Dalwai is of the opinion that the Indian Muslims are duty bound to echo the feelings of the majority of their Hindu countrymen, without showing the least signs of independent thinking. Hindus may have a right to differ from the generally accepted views regarding Kashmir and the Assam infiltrators. But the Muslims have no such right. They must not talk like Rajaji, J.P. etc.

On page 57, Dalwai says: 'Even while they claim to be perfect nationalists, Muslim leaders advance arguments to support the Pakistani claim on Kashmir. In the same way they argue that all Pakistani infiltrators in Assam are in fact Indian Muslims.'

All this is of course wrong. As honest and consistent hostages the Indian Muslims must, in the opinion of Dalwai, only vie with one another in uncritically accepting all official opinions. Today, 'they compete with each other to vouch for the peaceful intentions of Pakistan' while what they should do is the exact reversal of this policy, if they want to be at peace with the majority community.

It is not difficult to see how dangerously inconsistent Dalwai's views are. He wants the Indian Muslims to develop their critical faculty only in matters of religion, so that they are able to criticise the 'sociology and the philosophy of Islam'. He is also eager to enable the Muslims to criticise Pakistan and its policies.

Here are some more sins of the Indian Muslims as enumerated by Dalwai:

'... Whenever the Prophet is criticised, Muslims in India start movements and agitation, unparalleled in the rest of the Muslim world. The Khilafat committee is still stationed in India. The pan-Islamic minded Muslims in India exert the greatest possible pressure on the Government, for adopting a policy favourable to the Arabs. Indian Muslims make strong attempts to justify the Islamic pact between Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia etc.'

Thus, the standards set by Dalwai to judge the patriotism and nationalism of the Indian Muslims are so high that there are hardly any Muslims—except a few blessed individuals like M. C. Chagla—in the

whole country who can be called nationalists. It is, therefore, quite natural that he should regard the so-called 'nationalist Muslim a strange animal... who can be quite dangerous.'

How can the Hindus help the Muslims to change their obscurantist attitude? For this, thinks Dalwai, Hindu society will have to develop a peculiar kind of dynamism. Says he on page 94:

'I believe that if the Hindus were sufficiently dynamic, the Hindu-Muslim problem would be solved. For, if the Hindus were dynamic, they would subject the Indian Muslims to several shocks which history has spared them. Muslims would be left with one stark alternative to perish if they did not wish to change. And any society prefers change to extinction.'

The R.S.S. and the Jana Sangh followers apparently seem to have taken this advice to heart. But, alas, the secularist Hindu is bent upon 'spoiling' the Muslims and not allowing them to learn the lesson which the '*dynamic rashtravadi Hindus*' are trying to teach there. 'The Muslim communalist demand to make Urdu a second official language in U.P. and Bihar has been supported by the so-called modernist Hindus under the impressive label of secularism. These so-called secularist Hindus are opposed to the creation of a common Personal Law because it might displease the Muslims. They support Sheikh Abdullah and suggest measures which are bound to result in giving Kashmir over to Pakistan' to settle our disputes with that country. When members of the Jamaat-e-Islami are arrested for demonstrating against President Nasser in New Delhi, these secularist Hindus promptly protest. They back the Muslims' agitation against Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, publishers of the controversial book on the Prophet.'

It is obvious from this that the secularist Hindu is, in the opinion of Dalwai, as despicable a creature as the anti-secularist Muslim. No wonder then that he finds more bosom friends among the communalist Hindus.

It is also obvious that the most hateful creatures, in the opinion of Dalwai, are those Muslims who support the Jamaat-e-Islami. For them he has no compunction of any kind. Perhaps he would not hesitate to throw them all to the hungry lions, as was done by the anti-Christian emperors of ancient Rome. He is prepared to use any weapon, (falsehood, deceit, misrepresentation) to exterminate the Jamaat. He will not waste a single minute of his precious time to investigate whether the Jamaat had indeed demonstrated against President Nasser in New Delhi, or whether it at all allows its members to demonstrate against any one. He calls *Radiance* an Urdu newspaper (page 64). Obviously he has neither seen it nor cares to see it before condemning it or quoting from it.

As has already been pointed out, books like the one written by Dalwai, can only help to frighten the

Muslim minority in India and put it more and more on the defensive. Indeed such books are bound to defeat their own purpose, howsoever popular they may become among a particular section of the majority community. Their very existence is a sure guarantee to keep Muslims farthest away from modernism and secularism. Any one deciding to behave like Mustapha Kamal in a democratic country like India is bound to end up by behaving like Godse. At a time when Muslims can be successful only in ruthless dictatorships, which have already become out-of-date.

Any Muslim who wants to reform his community must first learn to identify himself with it—something which Dalwai obviously refuses to do. Naturally the Muslims regard him not as one of them but as one bent upon destroying their identity.

A.A.K. Soze

## COMMUNALISM AND THE WRITING OF INDIAN

**HISTORY:** By Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra, People's Publishing House, 1969

In order to be meaningful, history has to be a dialectical and continuous dialogue between the past and the present with an eye on the future. However, the problem arises when the past is studied from a particular standpoint, either consciously or unconsciously which results in distortion of history which lies very much at the root of the present social tensions.

No sensible historian, or even a sensible man for that matter, would deny that the major ideology behind the writing (or re-writing, as is the case with some) of Indian history has been communal. The matter does not end here. It goes much further, for this communal interpretation is the main plank of communalism in India. The communalist need not go to some 'mahant', 'maulana' or 'master' for his 'facts'. He can very well pick them up from any standard text book of history at the school and college levels. Thus the entire 'intelligentsia' is being fed on a history which is out and out communal. Studying the history of 'Hindu' and then the 'Muslim' period right from the seventh standard to graduate and post-graduate levels (where it undergoes a metamorphosis in name but remains the same in form) the 'educated Indian youth' really starts thinking along these lines. This theoretical grounding, coupled with the growing tensions of a complex society like ours, today, makes a travesty of what would otherwise have passed peacefully as the Gandhi Centenary Year.

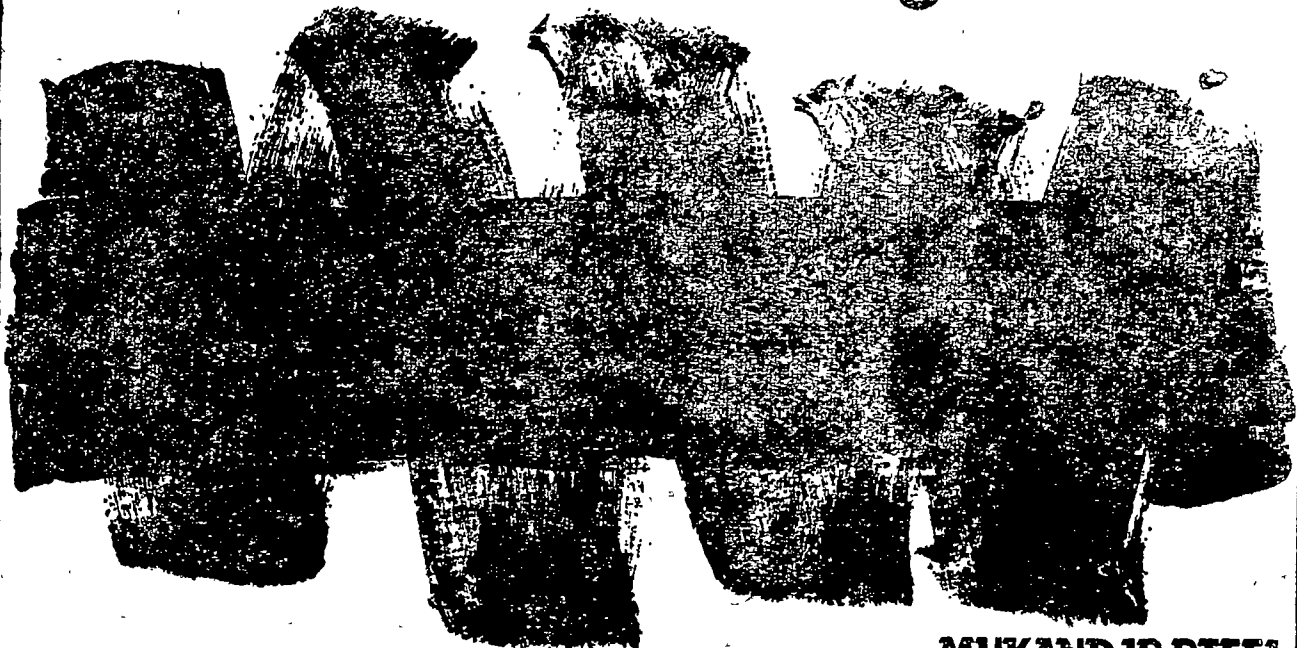
The need for exposing this malicious approach (which would no doubt amount to relegating some of the big guns of Indian history to the dust bins) has been long felt in the conscious academic circles. Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra who, along with a few others form the nucleus of



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progressive-objective teacher-historians in the Delhi University, must be congratulated for bringing out this book under review.

While the two papers by Romila Thapar and Harbans Mukhia stress in forceful terms that the communal identities did not exist in the Ancient and Medieval periods of Indian history, the one by Bipan Chandra tries to go into the genesis of the communal approach.

The present system of periodisation—Hindu, Muslim and British or Ancient, Medieval and British (which, in that it is based on the change of religion of the ruling class amounts to the same thing)—can be traced back to James Mills' *History of British India*. Romila Thapar has done well to point out the ludicrousness of such an approach.

Apart from the fact that such categorization of the history of India as one of relationship between the ruler and the ruled, it does not pass muster even when the problem is approached purely from the angle of dynamic history. Thus, as Romila Thapar argues, how can the period from about 1000 BC to AD 1200 be called Hindu when a number of major dynasties—the Mauryas, the Indo-Greeks, the Shakas, and the Kushans do not fit into this category. Should not then the period from about 500 BC to AD 300 be termed the Buddhist period? This is no doubt indulging in scoring debating points, but the basic fact remains that we can not call a period 'Hindu' or 'Muslim' just because the religion of the ruling class changes. To the common man it mattered very little if the oppressive rule of the Chauhans or some other feudal Hindu chieftains was replaced by that of the Turks. Otherwise, how does one explain the absence of any popular resistance to the Turkish rule in the countryside?

To the communal historian such questions are of no significance. Again, the fact that the common Muslim was in no way better off than, say, a rich Hindu moneylender who might have formed a part of the ruling class is pushed aside as impossible; economic and law and order measures of the 'Sultans' and the 'Mughals' are portrayed as directed solely against the Hindus; the form of government is taken to be *ipso facto* theocratic. The historian's own communalism is projected backwards, the two religions become alive, the contradictions within the same religion are coolly ignored with the result that Islam thinks, speaks, acts, persecutes and desecrates temples.

Communal identity as such did not exist in Ancient or Medieval India. It is largely the creation of British historians and their Indian counterparts. The Britishers obviously had their own interest in doing so, but why did the Indian historians fall a prey to such an approach? Bipan Chandra seems to have made a major point when he remarks that 'the lack of deeper penetration of nationalist ideology has in itself been a factor in the prevalence of communal ideology . . . Communalism enabled them to feel

nationalistic without opposing imperialism . . . It enabled them to compromise personal safety with national sentiments.'

Thus the curious phenomenon of the lackeys of British imperialism becoming fiercely nationalistic in their treatment of Maratha, Rajput and Sikh chieftains, seeking a 'Golden Age' in the remote past and by implication blaming the Muslims for their present predicament.

While this is no doubt true, the prevalence of a communal approach to Indian history among the 'honest, nationalist' historians even today can be explained only in regard to their narrow and reactionary outlook towards history itself. To a person obsessed with dynastic and political history, the religion of the ruling dynasty is all important.

If, however, Indian history was studied as a relationship between the ruler and the ruled, it would not have been vitiated by this communal virus. Economic and social history would have shown that all the Muslims did not form the ruling class; that the agrarian policies of both Shivaji and Aurangzeb were similar in their distrust of the big zamindars. Even a careful study of political history would have shown that the war of succession between Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb was not fought on religious grounds. The fact that the rise of the Maratha movement was anterior to the communal policies of Aurangzeb and that the Maratha ruling class retained its regional character up to the end, would have shattered the myth of Maratha nationalism.

It is curious that while adhering to such an approach all through the authors fight shy of admitting so in the Preface. Nevertheless the publication of this book is most welcome. It is high time we realised that it is this sort of writing along with a rehaul of the school and university syllabi that can root out communalism from the minds of young students of history. This is all the more important, for, in the present context, the question of a proper historical perspective is not simply academic.

Shahid Amin

**REPORT ON AHMEDABAD:** By Ajit Bhattacharjea, Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee, 1969

**BUTCHERY IN AHMEDABAD:** By B.N. Pandey, Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee, 1969

Communal rioting in India is not showing any signs of abating. During the British days one could blame the alien imperialists for these unfortunate happenings. Whom to blame in today's secular and sovereign India? Certainly not the masses who are the victims of violence. The roots are deeper and much beyond mere communal revivalism and religious bigotry. The responsibilities have to be shared by, besides the governments at

the Centre and in the States, the progressive forces and those who claim to be economic-oriented Left forces including the hard core of intellectuals.

It is against this background that the two small but significant booklets under review make thought-provoking and startling reading. The studies are spot-surveys of the blood-stained streets of the land of Gandhiji's birth.

Ajit Bhattacharjea strips naked the inaction of the intelligence men as well as of the Central and Gujarat Governments for their unpardonable lethargy, and permitting such frenzied communal killings. The politicians owe an explanation to the nation for exploiting communal feelings of the electorate for self-aggrandisement.

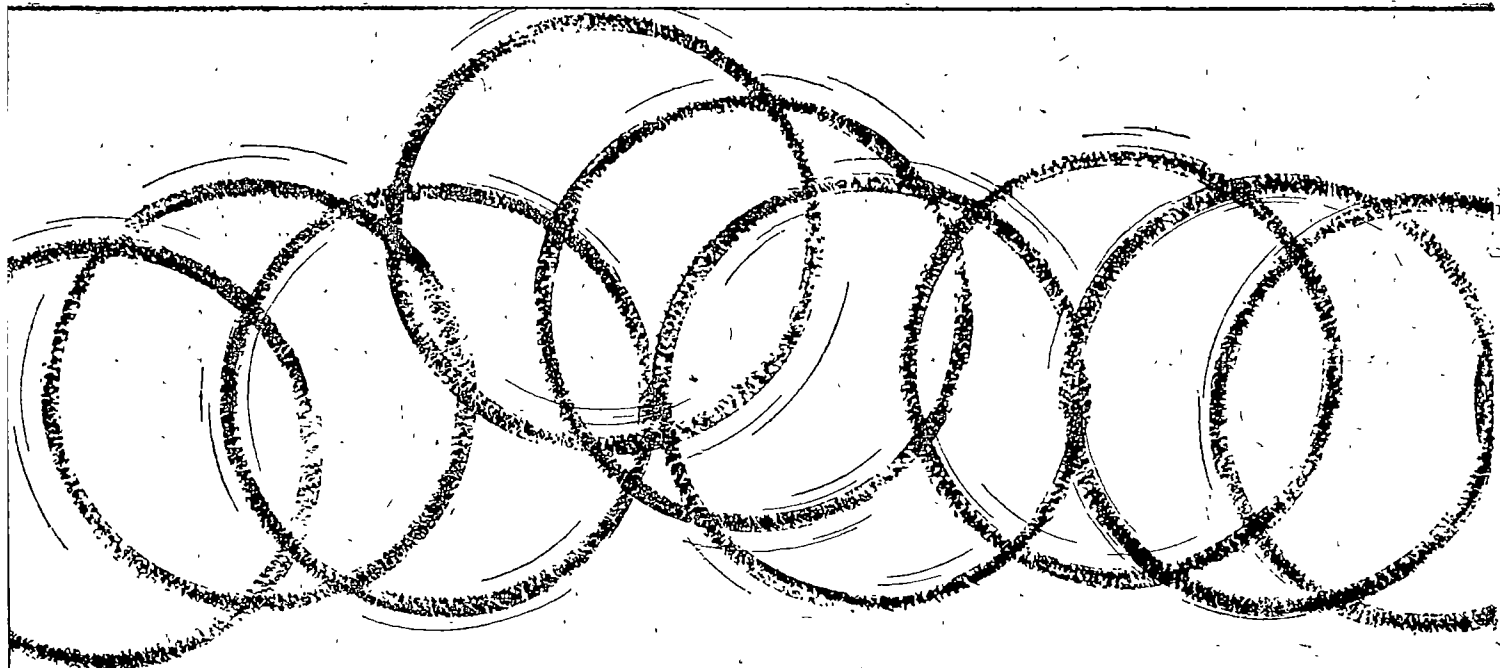
Bhattacharjea has reliable information that 'shops and houses of the members of a particular community were selected (with the help of voters lists and telephone directories) for burning. Fleets of cars shuttled up and down ferrying rioters and carrying petrol tins'. This just cannot be an act of spontaneous anger. The intelligence men were either ignorant or they were not allowed to function. The author raises a serious poser for the guardians of our sovereignty: is our social fabric

so fragile that any foreign enemy or domestic disorder can paralyse a major city.

The second booklet can be divided into two parts: (1) What Mahatma Gandhi would say and do in a situation like the one under review, and (2) a politico-economic and historical analysis of the riots. In the second part of the booklet, the author does a lot of plain speaking to tell how the Muslim masses have been deliberately kept away from the mainstream of national life both by the Muslim leadership and by the secular parties. The political parties of the Left as well as the Right have failed to function with any meaningful association. Even the trade unions never cared to delve deep into the community life of the Muslims.

Both Bhattacharjea and Pande have blamed Congress for allowing the Muslims to remain aloof from the main currents of life. Instead of encouraging the truly nationalist Muslims (their number is regrettably low) the Congress preferred to deal with ex-Leaguers and their young henchmen and that too for vote-catching purposes.

The authors have spared the apathetic Indian intellectual who has become escapist. Why should these people fear writing boldly against the communal menace. A faithful and non-communal interpretation of Indian history needs to be written as



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was attempted by Jawahar Lal Nehru in his *Discovery of India*. Let an intellectual 'Jehad' against communal and reactionary forces be launched. Negatively the literateurs would be doing a great service to the cause of national integration by refusing to write a word that may embitter communal relations.

C. R. Rathee

**GHAZALIAT-E-GHALIB :** Muslim Progressive  
Group, 1969

Language has often proved to be a factor for animosity between different regions. Some serious communal riots have also been there on the language question. The case of Urdu is significant in this regard in view of the hostility it has to face at least in some parts of Hindi speaking North India.

Apart from the Persian script there is little to distinguish Urdu from the commonly used Hindustani. The popularity of Urdu writers and poets has been marked among the Hindi readers because of some publication of their work in the Devnagari script.

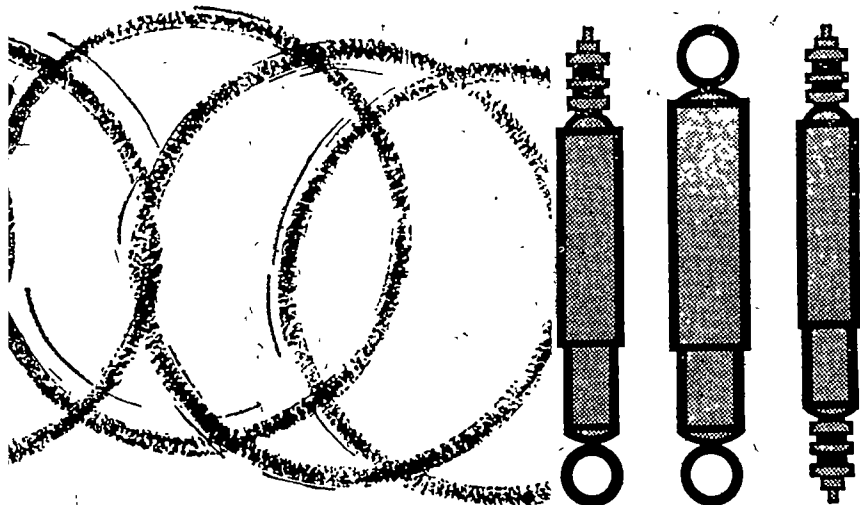
If Urdu could be written in the Roman script on a large scale, many problems would be solved

in no time. The Muslim Progressive Group's attempt at publishing a selection of Ghazals of Ghalib thus assumes much importance. This is the first venture of its type in many ways.

The publication of Indian language works in Roman had so far used diacritical and other signs to create the typical syllables. The book under review is absolutely devoid of any difficult diacritical signs. Defined use of capital and small letters of the Roman script have been used to create the desired effect and a brief introduction of the combinations helps acquaintance with the system. It has been found that the system is quite useful for young readers who find little difficulty in reading the Ghazals.

The volume has been compiled by an editorial board headed by Professor M. Mujeeb. The main homework was done by Danial Latifi who has been working on the project for quite some time. Many more publications like the one under review will help a great deal in the promotion of understanding between speakers of different languages in the country and the integration of the cultural fabric of the nation.

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# Communications

Congratulations for the excellent job you have done by bringing out a special number of SEMINAR on conservation (November 1969). Indeed through the articles published, you have greatly succeeded in focussing attention on the main issues involved and also in suggesting some solutions. It is a fact that even many educated people are completely unaware of the existence of such a problem as conservation; I believe that the problem of conservation is comparable in gravity to such issues as the current indiscipline of students. The only difference is that the latter concerns the human activities in the present moment, while the impact of the former will be felt only at a later stage. However, the problem will have to be tackled immediately to get the desired result. An open discussion on it is a welcome step towards this end.

I may suggest to you another subject for discussion in one of the SEMINAR issues: 'India's Marine Resources'. In earlier times, man had enough things to do and care for on land to turn his attention to the seas. But, today, we are 52 crores in number and soon there will be many many more of us to be crowded on to this ancient, over-utilized land. With about 5,000 k.m. of sea-coast and almost the entire Indian Ocean at our disposal, we have done precious little in the direction of the utilization of the nation's marine resources, for the welfare of our people.

It am afraid that the sea is still neglected in our perspectives for the future, because Delhi is too far away from its pulsations and consequently it has failed to attract the attention it deserves. But, along with so many others, I am convinced that the sea has a significant role in the future greatness of our country. (In fact, the late Dr. K. M. Panikkar emphasised this point three decades earlier in his 'India and the Indian Ocean'.)

Today, nations which are much smaller and which have much lesser reason to be concerned about the seas are taking much more care on the subject. I am of the opinion that

the Government of India should bring out a White Paper on our marine resources and declare a marine policy and a marine science policy both of which, then, must be followed up with vigour. I believe that a special number of SEMINAR might help this cause.

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THE symposium on 'Our Political Parties' (December, 1969) is timely but disappointing because it has failed to bring out the more significant aspects of the problem. It does not really grasp the important discussions of what is happening and repeats the oft repeated notions about the political parties in India.

The problem has been posed in extremely generalized and vague terms. The poser represents the biases of the common man about political parties and does not indicate a scholarly analysis of the working of the party system in India. For example, Sushil Kumar asks 'change of government satisfies the discontent. The government changes but what else?' Even assuming that it is insignificant that the party replacing the ruling party resembles the old party in power, does not the change of government represent reallocation of power in the society? It also results in modifying the sharp differences between the political haves and have-nots. Change of power relationships even without change of programme encourages important structural changes in the political system. The Congress Party would not have split in 1969 if it had not been replaced in so many States in the fourth general election in 1967 and the mini-general election of 1969.

Change of government is important for other reasons also. When the opposition parties acquire experience of government work,

the opposition (consisting of former ministers) becomes more knowledgeable. This also develops greater competitiveness. In a traditional system of politics with one party dominance, there are no alternatives available. The new situation provides alternatives and hence the phenomenon of defections. The market situation concept is relevant in that it is the barometer of the competitiveness in politics.

Kumar also talks of the non-Congress parties having 'negative objectives'. Ratna Dutta has rightly pointed out that 'in many parts of the country, the candidates at the polls rode to victory on the crest of social movements which are deeper than merely anti-Congressism'. Besides, if to change the existing unfavourable situation to one's advantage is negative, how does one attempt to achieve the positive objectives (whatever they are)?

He also seems to lament that the State level party organisations do not obey the dictates of the central High Commands. This is because of the operations of the democratic principles and the assertion of regional aspirations. It is not possible to have monolithic party organisations with the dominant spirit of democratic centralism in an open society. Moreover, it is natural that the authority of the central leadership is bound to decline particularly when the leaders at the central level, without the charisma of their predecessors, endeavour to rule without consent.

One also finds contradictions in the poser. For example, he argues that it is not possible to classify Indian politics 'according to their social base' and adds: 'Wage earners all over the country do not support the same party; nor do the industrialists, rajahs, landlords or traders, nor do the urban people, nor do the rural people. A close look at the parties should show that every party is supported by a combination of all these elements'. It is just facetious rhetoric because no party can aspire to win on the basis of one section's support. However, Kumar goes on to contradict himself. In his fourth proposition, he seems to disregard his own argument when he asserts: 'The parties are multifunctional structures because, far from aggregating the varied interest, they represent, at least tend to represent, particular interest'. How can parties without a distinct social base represent particular interests?

One may also comment here that it is dangerous to use unfamiliar jargon without

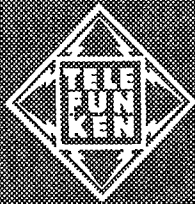
analyzing the specific situation. This tendency, to borrow terms without comprehending their meaning, results in such profound statements, as 'The future lies in the secularization of politics...Secularization must set the stage for polarization'. Is it a prediction or the author's wish?

Talking of the end of ideology in Indian political parties, one should remember that most of the parties in India profess to believe in some form of democracy, socialism and secularism and still it does not mean much. The split of the Congress has demonstrated that it is not enough for a party to demonstrate its commitment to a particular set of ideological propositions by means of passing periodic resolutions and raising suitable slogans. The best way to discern the ideological positions of a party is to analyse its actions. Karunakaran points out the gap between the professed ideologies of the parties and their practices. If this gap persists over a long period, would it not be desirable for the students of politics to construct a party's ideology on the basis of its actions rather than look for the party manifestos and resolutions.

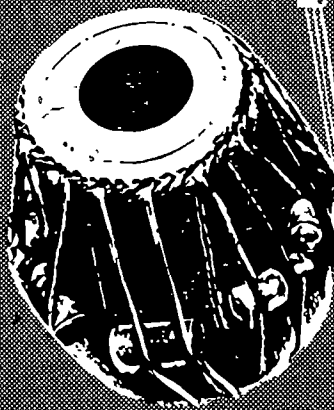
Radical changes are taking place in the Indian political parties and this has deeper meaning for the direction of the political system. Intra-party and inter-party dimensions of this phenomenon are inter-related and interdependent. Witness the way non-Congress parties have been affected by the split in the Congress. These relations also operate in the dynamic framework and the rate of change for sometime past has been very high. Under the circumstances, a study of the political parties will not be complete without an analysis of the emerging alignments because, ideology notwithstanding, the shift of power itself is of vital interest for political analysis. For instance, some of the political parties and groups which had been alienated from the political system and wanted to disrupt it, now find a place in it. The new situation may also imply that the policy process will now demonstrate greater discussion for mutual adjustment and less dominance by the High Commands. Structural changes are taking place in the political parties and this is not a continuation of the status quo as Kumar claims. It is important to assess the developments in political parties with reference to their multiplier effect on the political system.

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In radios  
the world  
over  
Telefunken  
set the  
standard



TELEFUNKEN

# 126

## OUR LIBRARIES

a symposium on  
a major aspect  
of national education

symposium participants

### THE PROBLEM

Posed by **Girja Kumar**, Librarian,  
Indian Council of World Affairs

### A SERVICE

**George S. Bonn**, visiting professor,  
now associated with the Union Ministry  
of Food and Agriculture

### THE UNIVERSITIES

**N.N. Gidwani**, Librarian, Rajasthan  
University Library

### SOCIAL SCIENCE DOCUMENTATION

**J. Saha**, Librarian, Indian Statistical  
Institute Library

### THE SYSTEM

**S.R. Ranganathan**, National Research  
Professor in Library Science

### BOOKS

Reviewed by **D.B.R. Chaudhuri**,  
**A. Chaya Devi**, **Shaukat Ashraf**  
and **A. Ansari**

### FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography  
compiled by **D.C. Sharma**

### COVER

Designed by **Dilip Chowdhury**

# The problem

THE importance attached to libraries in a society is the correct barometer of its cultural attainment. Theatres, museums and public libraries dominate the central plaza in any cultured city of the world. Take the municipal district of New Delhi as a case study. The capital township can boast of very few public libraries in the total length and breadth of its sixteen square miles; hardly surprising, considering the fact that the members of the ruling elite have been frequently overheard to lament about the lack of time to read. The story of the editor of a leading newspaper in New Delhi admitting to not reading a single book in the last thirty years is not atypical. We are in fact run by the most ill-educated ruling class in the annals of mankind during modern times. The neglect of libraries is in line with the general anti-intellectual atmosphere prevalent in the capital of India and most State capitals.

The library alone can perform the function of providing facilities for perpetual self-education. Very few of our public, university, research, State and national libraries are said to perform the function of being the cultural centre stimulating new ideas and generating controversies so essential in a society making brave attempts to democratize itself at all levels.

Take the example of the Delhi Public Library with its several branches spread within the limits of the Delhi Municipal Corporation. It is, no doubt, performing useful service by providing reading material to the thousands of citizens of Delhi, mostly at the neo-literate level. No one has however heard of its being described as the cultural and intellectual centre in the generally understood sense. By applying

similar standards, the National Library of Calcutta with the largest holding of all libraries in India cannot be described as the focal point for intellectuals of the metropolitan city. Libraries abroad however are the focus of cultural activity in a large number of communities. The most outstanding example is that of the public library systems especially in Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. The New York Public Library System is the most distinguished instance of its kind.

Free library service is a well-recognized principle the world over. The responsibility for providing funds for library development devolves upon the government. The University Grants Commission has taken onus for the development of university libraries, which now form a substantial segment of the library system in India. Since the major responsibility for the promotion of education rests with the States under the Federal Constitution, the burden on the Central Government lies very lightly. The four States of Madras, Mysore, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have passed public library acts and thus taken statutory responsibility for developing a library system in the respective States. Each of them has set up a State Central library to co-ordinate library development.

The State Library System of Madras has been a successful experiment within the limits of available financial resources. The system in Mysore State is developing fast and on the right lines at the moment. These instances are however exceptions rather than the rule. The programme of library development in the other States of India has been so insignificant that it does not merit much attention. The



only substantial progress in the last twenty years has taken place among university libraries, because of the early initiative of the University Grants Commission.

Library development in India in the past twenty years has been by fits and starts. Education being mainly a State subject, there may be some difficulty in evolving an all-India policy. The responsibility for the limited success rests mainly on the State governments and to some extent with the Ministry of Education of the Government of India. The National Advisory Board of Library established in 1966 to advise the government on all matters relating to libraries was a packed body and it is in any case as dead as dodo. The post of Honorary Library Adviser created in the Ministry a few years ago is, in the words of the present incumbent, purely an honorific one. No clear-cut policy for the development of a national library system seems to have been evolved, notwithstanding the availability of funds under the first three five-year plans. Any long range policy for building up a national library system can be executed only through a system of National Central Libraries standing at the apex.

This elementary principle of library administration is yet to be learnt in this country. New Delhi is not only deprived of a public library system, but it also lacks a National Library which it deserves as the capital of Bharat—that is India. The National Library in Calcutta cannot appropriate to itself the honour of the central library of India in its present state. The system of National Central Libraries should be the repository of major collections as well as provide leadership to the library system as a whole. The Calcutta Library is in no position to claim the honour.

The story about the National Library of India, officially called the Central Reference Library, is worth recapitulation. There has been some fanciful talk of converting the Parliament Library into the national library of India. This deceptively bright idea came into the mind of some people who had happened to visit the Library of Congress in Washington. Happily it died a premature death subsequently. The second five-year plan talked of steps to 'set up or develop all the four National Libraries at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras'. The reference presumably is to the National Library (Calcutta), Connemara Public Library (Madras), Asiatic Society Library (Bombay) and the non-existent Central Reference Library at New Delhi. One has the distinct suspicion that our decision-makers were confusing the establishment of four repositories for depositing books under the Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act, 1954, subsequently

amended in 1956, at four centres in the country with plans for four national libraries to stand at the apex of the national library system. Never has clarity emerged out of confusion.

The establishment of the National Library of India centralizing all activity at one place is no longer considered desirable. This is equally true of the documentation activity in the country. There is an increasing consensus about the development of a system of National Central Libraries under a co-ordinated plan. The system may comprehend the existing institutions like the National Library (Calcutta) and the Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre, the proposed national libraries for agriculture, medicine and science as well as set up the national social science and humanities libraries and the National Social Science Documentation Centre. Furthermore, national libraries may be set up in Madras, Bombay, Hyderabad and New Delhi.

The Central and many State governments have thus been culpable of criminal neglect of library services. It was unbelievable indeed that the whole fabric of the educational policy could be designed without much consideration for developing a comparable library service. The only silver lining has been the sensible library policy pursued by the University Grants Commission for a number of years. Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, the then Chairman of the U.G.C., sought the advice of Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, the doyen of librarians in India, and constituted a library committee in 1957 under his chairmanship to advise the Commission on matters relating to the proper functioning and management of libraries. The report of the Ranganathan Committee is a landmark in the annals of library development in India in as much as the committee recommended the upgrading of librarians on par with the teaching staff, devised an objective formula for the increase in library staff in direct proportion to work load and gave recognition to the Master's degree in library science as the basic degree for senior jobs in library science.

It is a matter of regret that the basic recommendations of the Ranganathan Committee have been compromised through a nibbling process carried over a number of years, resulting in the nullification of that historic report. Further, the U.G.C. has thought it fit to appoint a second library committee with the ostensible object of reviewing the earlier proposals. The Committee is composed of several senior librarians whose objectivity is widely disputed in professional circles, because they are on record in opposing what has come to be popularly known as the Indian School of Library Thought. The fears are

confirmed by a cursory glance over the preliminary decisions of the Committee in its very first sittings. What is one to make of the following statement: 'It was pointed out that some university libraries were in disarray consequent on the classification of books according to the newly introduced 'colon system' of Dr. Ranganathan. The unfortunate statement betrays more ignorance than knowledge of the latest techniques.

Fresh thought may be given to the reconstitution of the reviewing Committee so that it becomes a true representative of the profession.

Library science as a distinct discipline has acquired international recognition. It is now closely allied to the important discipline of information science, which is threatening to overwhelm the traditional sciences. The latest techniques of Ranganathan's Colon Classification have begun to interest the practitioners of computer technology. The library profession is well disposed towards the latest advances because of the theoretical orientation of training in library science provided at library schools in India. The syllabi for library education in India are the most advanced because of the emphasis on theory rather than techniques which can be learned quickly in the library at a later date. Technique is the strong point of the American system of library education. The theoretical framework in library training is largely due to the farsightedness of Ranganathan. The library schools of UK are now following this path.

Unfortunately, the bureaucratic element among decision-makers in library matters has made sustained efforts to sabotage the present system of library education, on the specious plea that the so-called international system be adopted in this country. The department of library science of a premier Indian university has been the subject of continuous onslaughts to introduce what Ranganathan has appropriately termed the 'American way of thinking'. It is indeed distressing to note that the authorities of important institutions in India allow themselves to be subjected to scrutiny by the foreigner, especially when all the expertise we require is available locally for the mere asking.

The distressing aspect of the situation is the increasing intrusion of the foreigner into our internal affairs, mostly arranged with the connivance of local authorities. The Delhi University Library and the Department of Library Science alone have received five missions from one country to advise them. The problems of Delhi University are likely to be aggravated by this. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research invited recently three librarians from abroad, with funds provided by

a foreign foundation, to constitute a committee to advise the Government of India about the development of an agricultural library system in India. The record of an Institute of Technology is unbeatable because it has been inviting junior librarians from several non-distinguished universities in the United States for several years.

The present report presents an unusually gloomy picture of the situation prevailing in the library world of India at the present moment. Such a conclusion is implied, but like several logical conclusions it need not be said to be valid. Much has happened in the past twenty years that gives a feeling of pride in the achievements of the library profession. This fact is now recognized by many scholars, familiar with the world of librarianship in pre- and post-independent India. It is necessary to strike a mean to be able to make an objective assessment of the situation.

While the heart beats at the right spot at the middle level in the profession, a similar certificate of health cannot be given in respect of the top level. The adage that there is something rotten in the State of Denmark finds its fullest expression in the state of affairs at the apex. A solution to the running dispute about the future of the India Office Library is not in sight, with wrangling continuing merrily between India, Pakistan and Great Britain. This issue should not have taken twenty years to resolve itself. The development of library resources in India is closely linked with the final decision about the disposal of the India Office Library, this being the finest extant collection on modern India. The dispute must be resolved one way or the other very soon.

The Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre, New Delhi, (INSDOC, in short), having the status of a national laboratory, is the biggest elephant in the show. With a bloated budget many times over the resources of any other library, the only utilitarian project undertaken by the Documentation Centre during fifteen years of its existence is the union catalogue of scientific periodicals available in Indian libraries. The project is likely to take considerable time to take final shape. The meagre output is surprising considering the amount of resources at its disposal and the expertise cumulated by its competent staff over a number of years.

It is essential to draw up an order of priorities of jobs to be performed by the INSDOC. Projects to be undertaken by it in future must be utilitarian and directly related to the requirements of the scientist. There should be more stress on documentation work, rather than the computer mania that periodically overtakes it. The course in the teaching

of library science and documentation is peripheral to its main task and should be handed over to Delhi University. The National Science Library project is a major enterprise which should be taken up with the earnestness it deserves. India certainly deserves a central library which should be the repository of all scientific periodicals and other literature published in the world. The undertaking of the preparation of abstracts of articles from educational periodicals published in India on behalf of the National Scientific Foundation is not understood, especially when the Central Secretariat Library (Ministry of Education) has been engaged in a similar enterprise independently. It needs to consolidate and put to proper and beneficent use its present resources.

The National Library (Calcutta), the Banaras Hindu University and the Delhi University Library are passing through a crisis situation, which has the potentiality of turning into a cancerous growth. The National Library is now suffering from the malady of unplanned growth over a number of past decades. It has an inflated organization which remains in a state of constant imbalance. There is no reprieve for the library, short of wholesale overhauling of its organization. Several improvements effected in its organization after independence have hardly made any qualitative change in the library. The recently appointed committee to suggest the future lines of development can merely suggest palliatives rather than the cure. The handing over of the National Library to the West Bengal Government may be seriously considered, so that the Calcutta administration can supervise it directly as one of the four national libraries.

The situation with regard to the Banaras Hindu University is no better. The services of Truman Capote may have to be harnessed to write another piece of best-selling true fiction in the style of his *In Cold Blood*. The library is constantly the subject of scrutiny by high powered committees appointed by the authorities of the university. The evidence placed before the committee already runs into several thousand pages. The place is a centre of intrigue and not a temple of learning as any library should be. It is ironic to note that the teams from the INSDOC and the National Library descended on this library sometime ago to reform it from without. More problems may have been created by the superimposition of a foreign element into the unstable situation of the library. The experiment failed miserably. No solution is yet in sight.

The situation in the Delhi University Library has been static for so many years that it gives the impression of stability. Now faced with

the problem of development due to the rapidly growing needs of the university, it is faced with a crisis of growth which must be tackled within the next five years. The very thought of utilising the major grant of funds received from the Ford Foundation is liable to aggravate the disease instead of providing the cure. The rumblings inside the library can be heard far and wide and have been duly noticed by many well wishers of the premier university of India. It is hoped that the university library system will begin to provide services soon at least on par with standards maintained by one of its constituent units, namely, the Ratan Tata Library of the Delhi School of Economics.

The most distressing aspect is the incapacity of the authorities in the institutions to improve matters through drastic measures. Furthermore, there are no signs of informed public opinion clamouring for rectification and full cost accounting. Unfortunately, there is no mechanism available in this country whereby the measures for redress can be demanded at the first indication of disturbance. The professional library organization like the Indian Library Association could have performed this task, but the premier library association has miserably failed, by having allowed itself to be managed in the past fifteen years without any definite aim. The other national library association, namely, the Calcutta-based Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centres (IASLIC) has done a remarkable amount of quiet work, but it has no voice in decision-making.

The solution of the problem is within our power. The first step in the painful process is to initiate a public debate on the place of libraries in our scheme of things. Democratic processes must be at work so that the librarians and others don't feel inhibited in participating in the debate. There is a considerable amount of resentment among younger elements against the manner in which the seniors have been running the affairs of the profession. Since the question involves libraries of all types—national, State, academic, research and public—the answer must be found in a wider context. The basic questions to be reviewed are: the present state of libraries and the discipline of library science in India, the role of the personalities involved, agencies for policy making, statutory legislation for libraries and other related matters. The objective can be achieved most effectively by the appointment of a small parliamentary committee assisted by a group of professional librarians to go into all the matters relating to libraries in India.

# A service

GEORGE S. BONN

THE primary problem of the libraries in India is people.

In his wide-ranging poser article for this issue of SEMINAR the author emphasized this fact again

and again although he used a number of different terms and expressions throughout the article to make the point. Thus, community; central government, State government, authorities, missions,

commission, committee, organization, association, profession and, of course, librarians are all, generically, people who in one role or another can and do have some effect on libraries whether for good or ill.

Space, perhaps, did not permit the author of the poser article to single out library users for special attention. A library's users, along with its non-users, make up the library's community, all the people in the particular school, college, university, city, state, company, institute, agency association, or other established organization which the library was set up to serve. A library's users, both satisfied and unsatisfied, are in the best position to judge the effectiveness of any library and they are, by far, the most important people in the life of a library. (A library's non-users are important, too, since many if not all of them are potential users, if only the library can find out how it can be useful to them.)

Another group that merits some attention in any discussion about libraries is the library suppliers, the book dealers, the subscription agents, the equipment vendors, the magazine binders, the people who are in a position to support (or obstruct) the effectiveness of any library; they, too, are important people in the life of a library.

The officials of the library's parent organization certainly should be mentioned here also. They are the people who first decided that there should be a library and who remain in a position to decide the fate of the library based on their assessment of the effectiveness of the library in furthering the purpose it was meant to serve. While they are, indeed, important people in the life of a library the amount of attention they get is all too often a measure of the obsequiousness of the librarian rather than of

their own real importance to the organization.

The man in the middle of all these important people is the librarian. And, he, certainly, is one of the people who are important in the life of a library and who, by definition, constitute the primary problem of libraries in India.

In India, the central position of people in the life of a library cannot be emphasized enough. In any country where financial resources and locally-produced material resources are still limited, where facilities and equipment are still inadequate to the need, where library development has an unavoidably low priority in local and national plans, and where, at the same time, human resources are virtually unlimited, it is these human resources that must compensate for all other deficiencies. It is the people of India, properly informed, properly motivated, properly guided, who can and must develop and use good libraries. To the ever-increasing numbers of literate, educated, and research-minded people in India the development of libraries is essential. To the growing number of trained librarians in India the development of libraries ought to be a patriotic and professional challenge.

Yes, the primary problem of the libraries in India is people.

One gathers from the provocative poser article that in India there are few libraries of any kind that are as good as they should be. The author, of course, may be quite correct. But maybe library users in India are not as well informed about what makes a good library as the author is; they cannot very intelligently or convincingly demand something better if they have no standards by which to judge what they already have.

Unfortunately, there is no universally applicable formula which, when certain standard

values are inserted, will necessarily guarantee a good library. True, there are some well-thought out minimum standards for budget, floor space, size and composition of staff, numbers of books and periodicals, and other measurable factors, below which no library should be allowed to go if it is expected to be a good library. Yet, the one factor that marks the real distinction between libraries cannot be either standardized or physically measured. This factor is service and it is the very essence of librarianship, a fact not always fully understood by either librarians or library users.

It is universally accepted that the sole purpose of a library is to serve the needs of its particular community, those needs that by their nature could be satisfied in some measure by a library: the need for information, the need for inspiration, and the need for recreation. To do this properly requires (1) that the librarian know very clearly what the community's needs are, individually and collectively, and (2) that the community itself know very clearly what the library can and should do for it, individually and collectively. If the essence of librarianship is service, the cornerstone of service is rapport between library and community, between librarian and user. (More will be said later about this necessary library-community rapport and on ways to achieve it).

Guided by his knowledge of the community's needs the librarian develops the library's resources, facilities and internal procedures, and the library's external ways and means (commonly referred to as library services) that will, in his professional judgment, best serve the community's needs as he knows them. The entire library staff must then know how to exploit the resources, maintain the facilities, carry out the pro-

cedures, and operate the services as effectively and as efficiently as possible commensurate with their training, their experience, their knowledge, and their job responsibilities.

A library's internal procedures should be of no concern to the library's users. These behind-the-scene activities must, of course, be professionally planned, intelligently managed, and efficiently performed, always keeping in mind the needs of the library's users. Library users normally are laymen in such matters and cannot be expected to be more than mildly interested in them for their own sake. If the users feel their needs are not being adequately served they have only to describe the symptoms to the librarian who, as the professional expert, is to diagnose the trouble and treat it as quickly as possible, since any delay in treatment or, what is worse, ignoring the complaint or making light of the symptoms will only lead to complications and eventual drastic action of some sort. (Calling in outside experts may be only the first, and mildest, step taken.)

A library's resources, on the other hand, conventionally are the direct concern of the library's users, here in India at least, and particularly in academic libraries and in special (subject research) libraries. Teachers, research workers, or administrators, as the case may be, in the parent organizations of these libraries are expected to select books and periodicals for the libraries in the areas of their special interests, subject only to budgetary or programme considerations determined by library review committees made up of key people in the organizations who may be expected to look after the overall development of their libraries' resources. The selection of more general works, general encyclopedias, dictionaries, and the like, is usually left to the librarian.

This system of building library collections works well if all

specialist-selectors are equally zealous, equally considerate, and equally library-minded. If not, the library will become lop-sided. And here in India there are other hazards to building good, balanced libraries: the great distances that separate India from the present world-wide centres of book and journal publishing, the inadequate arrangements within India for publicizing and distributing either foreign or Indian publications, the rising costs of books generally not to mention foreign exchange, the growing language problem, and, in Delhi, particularly, the common practice of book dealers to send the latest available foreign books to most of the libraries 'on approval'.

Most of these are well-known, self-evident problems. But the on-approval system so popular in Delhi is so essentially helpful, so basically simple, so depended upon, indeed, so entrenched, that its shortcomings may not even be noticed. From the librarian's point of view the system is ideal: the subject specialists see and can actually examine the latest available books in their fields, the library acquires books and the latest available books at that with little or no effort on its part, and the dealers have a relatively stable market for some of their foreign books. So where's the catch?

The catch is *what is available*. Understandably, book dealers and their wholesalers, including agents of specific publishers, stock only what (in both title and quantity) they think they can sell based either on their experience with regular customers (including or on their assessment of publishing and reading trends). So the basic stock of foreign books in India is limited largely to trade books with a predicted market. Furthermore, only 130 of the 2,000 publishers in the U.K. and only 270 or so of the 4,000 publishers in the U.S. have agents in India who stock their books. (There

are also about 40 stockist-dealers who specialize in U.S.S.R. publications, but there are no stockists who specialize in books from any other countries.) True, these few publishers may account for much of the world's book production in English, but academic and research libraries (elsewhere in the world, at least) need works in other languages and works of the kind that only learned societies, university presses, and other smaller specialized publishers would be likely to produce, and these are not usually stocked here.

The proportion of the world's output of books that is routinely received in India is small. The proportion of the world's output of specialized and advanced level books that is routinely received in India is almost negligible. So the selection of the already limited stock of worthwhile foreign books in India that is available in any one bookstore can readily be imagined, and it is from this selection that dealers choose books for not just one library but for a number of libraries on their on-approval distribution list.

Nor is this the saddest part of the business. To mix a maxim, a book in the hand is worth a much better one in the publisher's catalogue: it takes anywhere from three to nine months to receive foreign books ordered from a publisher's catalogue (unless, of course, they happen to be stocked somewhere in India), and the books may already be out of stock or even out of print because of the delay in receiving the catalogue in the first place. So it is better to buy what is available. In the normally impecunious Indian library, then, what is available not only displaces what may be much better (in the catalogue) but also precludes or prevents its purchase later on since the library may be able to afford only a few books in a given subject field (and now it has one!) or the librarian feels that the money may better be spent on some other subject not usually

covered by on-approval books since in either case the book would have to be ordered anyhow.

A related and even more pernicious common practice occurs at the end of the fiscal year when buying up what is available often becomes necessary in order to use up the committed but unspent money remaining in the library's account because of the non-receipt of previously ordered titles. In this case selection hardly matters.

(Some foreign publishers send books on approval to libraries in India directly, in pre-determined subject areas; the books are paid for or returned through local dealers. This system works so long as a library's needs can be satisfied by a relatively few publishers and so long as the publishers can sell at least 55 or 60 per cent of the books shipped on approval.)

It may well be that, considering the needs of the average student, teacher, research worker, or other library user in India, what is available is perfectly adequate so there is no cause for concern. It makes one wonder, though, about the level of needs of the average reader in India. It is obvious, however, that the needs of specialists and of serious research workers can be met only by intelligent, purposeful selection from professional and specialized bibliographic detection and selection aids expeditiously received.

A library's facilities and its services are the responsibility of the librarian and his staff, but they are instituted and organised in consultation with the library's users and in response to their particular needs. Since the needs may change from time to time and since the maintenance of the facilities and services may fluctuate, occasionally it becomes necessary for the librarian to devise periodic checks on how well the users' needs are being met, and to make adjustments accordingly. As with other internal procedures, the behind-the-

scenes operations required to keep the facilities and services in good working order should be of no concern to the library's users. All they should be expected to know is whether or not their library needs are being met.

The library needs of serious research workers, conscientious teachers, sincere administrators, and other earnest library users are pretty much the same the world over subject only to local pressures, local conditions, local social patterns, local standards of performance, or other local considerations that might affect them all the time or just on occasion. Consequently, library facilities and library services are becoming pretty much the same the world over, too, and many are, in fact, becoming actually quite international, interchangeable, and interdependent, with the result that in time library users will be at home in any academic or research library (or public library, for that matter) in the world.

Here is a list of some of the common facilities and services that people in the United States, for example, have come to expect from their libraries, which have, by and large, fairly high standards of service. Many of these, of course, have long been available here in India. Unless library users throughout India are aware of what libraries can do for them, how will they be able to tell how good or how bad their own library service is?

1. Circulation of library materials for home or office use,
2. Answering questions (in person, by phone, by mail.)
3. Providing facilities for reading, for reference, for study.
4. Ready access to the books, periodicals, and other material (easy-to-use card catalogue, open stacks, open almirahs).
5. Convenient and liberal schedule of open hours.
6. Periodicals and newspapers display area, browsing collection, children's books area, textbook and 'reserved book' collections, pro-

- tected area for expensive, rare, or irreplaceable material.
7. Audio-visual collections (recordings, films, film-strips, slides, pictures, photographs).
8. Talking books for the blind, large-print books for the weak-sighted, easy-to-read adult books for the neo-literates.
9. Bookmobiles (travelling collections).

10. Helping users in the use of the library and of bibliographic tools, individually, in groups, in classes, or even in a separate course.
11. Preparing bibliographies, reading lists, and exhibits for specific occasions (for persons, events, courses, etc., but not for theses or dissertations).
12. Referral to and, if necessary, introduction to other libraries if required.
13. Inter-library loan for teachers, staff, advanced students, and adult users.
14. Photoduplication facilities, microfilm/microfiche readers and reader-printers.
15. Faculty studies, seminar rooms, listening booths (for recordings), meeting rooms, auditorium, wash rooms, first-aid room.
16. Children's programme and adult cultural programmes (lectures, film shows, book talks, panel discussions).
17. Publishing and distributing library guides, aids to use, location devices, etc.
18. Publishing and distributing Library information bulletins.
19. Publishing and distributing new accession lists.
20. Other more specialized facilities and services as financial resources may allow, such as inter-library telex and telefacsimile, individualized documentation service, computerized information retrieval (and other services), translations, home delivery of books, and air-conditioning.

Certain of these facilities and services are obviously more appropriate, or may even be indispensable, in academic and research libraries; others in public and other general libraries. Many would be expected in all libraries, but precisely which ones can be determined only after considering the needs of a particular library's community. The

list, therefore, is merely suggestive and not at all definitive or valuational. It can, however, be used as a check list to find out if a library is giving the best service it can considering both the community's needs and the library's community support.

Good library service requires clear, intelligent, and sympathetic understanding on the part of both library and community of what the community's needs are and of what the library's role can and should be in serving these needs. Good library service is the offspring of an enlightened partnership between a library and its users.

On the community side of this partnership it is necessary, first of all, that the community's administration be aware of and can appreciate the benefits of library service in furthering the purpose for which the community exists, whether it be a school, a university, a company, a research institute, a government agency, or a city. The officials of the community have the initial responsibility to inform the director of the library as to (1) the purpose of the community and (2) the function of the library, as they see it, in furthering this purpose. The people of the community, citizens, research workers, teachers, students, administrators, must, from time to time, let the librarian know what their interests are and what their library needs are likely to be, to help him in planning the library's resources, facilities, and services effectively to satisfy these needs. In academic and research libraries this information is often collected by the librarian either formally or informally but the users should understand the reasons and should do what they can to make sure the library knows their interests and needs.

As members of a partnership existing for the common good, all users should be co-operative and reasonable and reasonably accom-

modating in making requests for service, in returning books and journals that someone else may need, in suggesting improvements in service, and in guiding the librarian when he consults them about their personal interests or about community matters. Above all, if any user has a question about library practice or about any matter pertaining to the library, he should first discuss it with the librarian so that he may clarify it or make any adjustment that needs to be made. And if a user has reason to be satisfied with some particular library service he should let the librarian know that, too, and let others know, also.

On the library side of this partnership it is essential that the librarian know as much as he can about his community and its informational, inspirational, and recreational needs, so that he can intelligently plan the library's resources, facilities, and services. The more specialized or academic the community, the more individualized should be the information.

The librarian, therefore, must become involved in his community by participating in all civic, cultural, educational, and other library-related activities which will, of course, depend on the kind of community (academic, research, government, public, etc.) the library is serving. He should get to know his regular (and potential) users in their offices, in their laboratories, in committee rooms, and in the coffee houses as well as in the library. He should be promoting library service at all times. He should be responsive and sympathetic to the problems and the needs of the library's users and he should be able to anticipate trouble of any kind and to have solutions ready when problems arise; he can, if he really gets to know his community.

It is just as essential that the librarian—the entire library staff—know as much as possible about the resources available in the

library, in the city, and in India, and how to exploit them fully. The resources of even a very small collection of books and journals, intelligently selected and suitably classified and catalogued or indexed, can be perfectly adequate to support good library service in almost any kind of community provided that the staff know the collection intimately and know how to use it effectively. There is considerable truth in the old cliché that an experienced librarian can satisfy 80 to 90 per cent of all reference questions using just four works: a good encyclopaedia, an unabridged dictionary, an almanac (yearbook), and a statistical abstract (of the country). In India with its limited financial support for most libraries, every librarian has got to know how to exploit what is available to him.

It is equally essential that the library staff read widely, follow current affairs, and be aware of the world about them. They must have the curiosity, the imagination, the intelligence, and the perception to relate everything they read, observe, hear, and experience to their job. In other words, as professionals they must be on the job 24 hours a day.

A good library anywhere in the world depends entirely on an enlightened community of users, a dedicated staff of qualified workers both professional and technical, and reliable sources of library materials (books, periodicals, films, recordings, and so on) and supplies (equipment, furnishings, office supplies, and the like). In short, a good library depends entirely on the people associated with it in one way or another. So too in India. The primary problem of the libraries in India is people.

A number of questions come to mind that may bring the problem into clearer focus.

It is understood and it is understandable that some 30 per cent of the people of India are literate. To be attracted to libraries, however, persons would need to be not only literate but also func-



tionally literate, that is, they must be able to read meaningfully more than names and simple signs. The significant question as far as libraries are concerned, however, is not simply how many people in India are functionally literate, but rather, how many functionally literate people in India are library-minded or are even interested in reading?

The next question might well be, what are libraries doing to make people in India more library-minded or interested in reading, not only the educated and functionally literate but also the neo-literate and even the illiterate? What are libraries doing to publicize their resources, their facilities, their services, their advantages, their benefits? What are libraries doing to supply and to promote scholarly and professional works to those who can use them or elementary and well-illustrated works (or films or talking books) to those who need them? In short, what are libraries doing to promote libraries in their respective communities?

Another question, from a different angle: how adequate and reliable are the selection and acquisition procedures in Indian libraries and the sources from which Indian libraries are supplied? How much 'selection by experts' is done on the basis of knowledge of material, of availability, of rational criteria, or of whim? How much attention is paid to building need-oriented but balanced collections? What are librarians, book dealers, stockists, and publishers doing to improve and to assure the publicizing, the reviewing, the supply, and the flow of books to Indian libraries both from abroad and from within India? In short, are Indian libraries as sound as they could and should be?

Still another question, and perhaps the central one: how fully dedicated and well qualified are the library workers in India, both professional and technical?

How loyal are they to their jobs, to their communities, to their directors, to their colleagues, to their profession (rather than to personalities who might help them get jobs or promotions)? How humanitarian and public-spirited are they, how concerned are they about (and with) the interests, needs and problems of library users? How receptive are they to change, how enthusiastic are they to learn about (and to use) new ideas, new techniques, new equipment, new bibliographic tools? How interested are they in improving themselves professionally and intellectually (rather than just financially), how much (and what) do they read of professional, community-related, and general literature? How active are they in professional and community-related work?

How well-versed are they in helping library users anywhere within the library? How well-informed are they about library resources, facilities and services not only in their own libraries but also in nearby (and more distant) libraries; and, especially, how good (and efficient) are they in exploiting these resources, facilities and services?

How willing are directors to listen to, to consult, to guide, to encourage, to accept younger staff members? How willing are they to allow and to stimulate staff members to write, to read, to participate, to grow? How enlightened are they about the principles and practices of good administration and of good management, and to what extent do they apply them?

Each librarian, library worker, and library director in every library in India has to answer each part of these multiple questions for himself. Every library's community will be interested in many of the answers, too, because some of the answers may help explain the state of affairs described in the poser article.

While it may be true that good librarians are born, not made, it

is also true that good librarians can be developed, given candidates with a certain minimum of general education, of aptitude, of motivation, and of willingness to undertake the necessary professional (or otherwise specialized) training. But given, too, the social, economic, and educational conditions in India today, the cultural traditions, and the state and localization of Indian libraries (pictured in the poser article) the 'certain minimums' will indeed be minimal. Students in India understandably go to library schools to get jobs, not necessarily to become librarians. So the library schools then must somehow develop good librarians out of mostly plain job hunters, a conversion which is at once difficult, delicate, and often desperate. That they succeed at all is more remarkable than that they succeed only sometimes.

Recent studies have shown that a number of practising librarians in Delhi and many alumni of the Department of Library Science of the University of Delhi feel that present day library education in India is not adequate. (See *Annals of Library Science and Documentation*, June 1968, pp. 57-59; and *Indian Library Association Bulletin*, January-March 1969, pp. 36-37.) Common complaints about graduates include that they lack sufficient practical knowledge of library work, of library materials, of library research, and of modern documentation techniques, and that they lack general knowledge, a professional point of view, and the concept of library service. Since the curricula and the papers are pretty much the same in all the 28 or so post-graduate library schools in India, no one of them is any better or any worse than another in what it has to offer.

The shortcomings in library education may well account for some of the shortcomings in Indian libraries pointed out in the poser article. It hardly mat-

ters that the emphasis is on theory in Indian library schools and, as the poser article incorrectly states, on technique in American library schools (it's on service!); it is the result that counts and the only criterion by which to judge the result is simply, how well do the graduates perform the job, i.e., how well do the graduates put to effective use what they have learned? (Incidentally, deferring all technique-learning to a library after passing the library school course may not always be possible in India. Former colleagues at the University of Delhi feel that very few libraries in India are either ready, willing, or able to give even rudimentary on-the-job training to new staff members. They agree they ought to, however.)

The only appropriate library school curriculum for any country in the world is one that is geared to the needs of the library profession in that country, is based on nationally-accepted professional standards, and is aimed at raising the level and the status of the profession throughout the country. Unfortunately, no one in India seems to know just what the needs of the library profession are here, in manpower, in service, in material resources, in financial support, in facilities, in equipment, in buildings, in systems, or in research; and, so far, it seems to have been virtually impossible to agree on professional standards, excepting for a number of excellent bibliographic and documentation standards that have been in effect for a number of years. Part of the difficulty may be that no nationally-accumulated data on the profession are available, either. So studies and surveys of Indian libraries will have to be made by somebody.

The purpose of a survey (or, for that matter, of a visiting professor or an adviser) is to stimulate local discussion which might lead to internal action. The more distant and more widely experienced the surveyer, the fresher,

broader, and less biased his point of view. (In India it may be difficult to find experts in librarianship who also are completely unbiased, as the poser article occasionally implies.)

To a foreign librarian, the distressing aspect of the visits by foreigners (almost always in partnership with Indian library specialists) to scrutinize or to advise Indian libraries and library schools, is not that there have been so many of them over the years, but that so little positive local discussion in terms of India's needs seems to have been stimulated by the reports they have made. One can only wonder why this is so, and discreetly leave it at that. One can also wonder at the innocence of those who accepted the petitions and the invitations in the first place. However innocent they were, they must also have been humanitarians with a world-wide view of professional librarianship who chose to be as socially useful as they could be where they conscientiously believed that their specialized knowledge and the 'American way of thinking' with its emphasis on service could be most helpful to most people.

The primary problem of the libraries in India is people: the communities of library users, the groups of library suppliers, and the staffs of library workers. And only people, these same people can solve the other problems in Indian libraries. In a democracy the people can do almost anything they want to with their country, to their country; or for their country; the choice is theirs. Indian librarians, for example, instead of unwittingly encouraging indolence (as some seem to have done by accepting as fact that no one really needs to be efficient in India since there are so many people who need work) should be actively encouraging diligence among their numerous colleagues by saying that they must all be efficient since India needs their help, as much as, if not more than, any other group

of professional workers. Every Indian librarian consistently should be doing as much as he can, weather permitting, to serve his particular community. He would thus also serve his country, his performance and by his example.

This is, admittedly, a western, humanitarian, service-oriented view of librarianship which conceivably may not be suitable or attractive to Indian librarianship. Perhaps the crux of the problem is the idea of personal service in librarianship as it is understood in Europe and America, the idea of helping other people to help themselves. Is this concept unknown, understood differently, or perhaps even unaccepted by Indian librarians? Has librarianship in India been intellectualized (and to that extent dehumanized) into library science partly to make it palatable and even alluring to people who might otherwise not be the least bit interested in it as a profession? Does library science in India emphasize theoretical concepts and scientific procedures just to make documents and information available to hypothetical users as impersonally as possible?

Librarianship and information science in much of the rest of the world aims to make documents and information available to real users as effectively, as conveniently, and as closely related to real needs as possible. As a matter of fact, excepting for what appears to be a greater attention to the human factor in the West, the relatively new 'Indian School of Thought' and the relatively old 'American Way of Thinking' are just not that different.

Perhaps the time will come when librarians, information scientists, and their customers all over the world will be compatibly programmed (like computers) to react to and to understand each other perfectly. But that time is not yet. Real people still must be served.

# The universities

N. N. GIDWANI

EDUCATIONAL leaders never tire of re-affirming the primary and focal position the library should have in our educational endeavour. Even our politicians swell this chorus by way of reflex action. With the knowledge explosion continually mushrooming all around and the terrific acceleration with which new technology is surging forward, life-long learning is our only way to survival. This has brought to the fore the growth of the adult education movement and the acceptance of continuing self-education as a compelling necessity.

This, however, presupposes the existence of a multi-tiered national library system which could cater to the reading needs of citizens of all ages—in fact, a cradle-to-

grave service. Such a library grid is currently available in the West in the form of an extensive network of academic, public and special libraries and other supporting information services. Such, however, is not the situation in our country. The only organised and supported sub-system with us is the university library. It would, therefore, be worthwhile to evaluate it here.

The U.G.C. since its establishment has been supporting university libraries, (whose number now exceeds 70) by giving them grants for books, buildings and equipment. The first guide-lines about how the Commission may help and advise the universities regarding their libraries were laid down in 1959 by a Library Committee

headed by Dr. Ranganathan. The Commission has recently set up a second Library Committee headed by Professor Wadia, with a view to accelerating their progress.

A serious charge has been levelled against the U.G.C. in this issue elsewhere. Regret has been expressed, that 'the basic recommendations of the Ranganathan Committee have been compromised through a nibbling process over a number of years resulting in the nullification of the historic report'. Not one example has been cited in support of this omnibus condemnation. This is to be regretted, for an objective scrutiny demolishes this charge. The Committee made its recommendations under seven heads, viz, buildings and furniture, release of U.G.C. grants, reading materials, relations with the book trade, library staff and library school. By and large, the Commission has implemented the basic operative recommendations. Sumptuous grants, exceeding 286 lakhs of rupees have so far been given to universities for constructing new library buildings or expanding the existing ones. The Committee suggested a period of 17 months for the utilization of the Commission's book grants. The period is now liberally extended to the entire plan period. Libraries get import licences to acquire direct materials from abroad; the upgraded scales of pay for professional staff, bringing them on a par with the faculty were implemented; whereas the report recommended that the Commission may help maintain only one first grade and six second grade teaching departments of Library Science, help has been extended to three times that number.

**A** number of recommendations are exalted exhortations whose implementation lies with the university itself. If duplicates of reference works and advanced treatises etc., are acquired, dated and moribund books not weeded out, new techniques of teaching not devised, instruction not made

'library centres', adequate library staff not provided and Certificate courses in library science run, in spite of the Committee's sane recommendations to the contrary, the blame certainly cannot be foisted on the Commission.

It would be appropriate here to high-light a select few but highly important retrogressive recommendations made by the Ranganathan Committee. Its staff formula ignores the inner geography of the library. For evolving the quantum of book-fund it recommends the grant for reading and kindred materials Rs 15 per capita on the basis of students registered in the University and Rs 200 per teacher. Ten years earlier, the Radhakrishnan Commission had recommended Rs 40 per student! The juxtaposed figures need no comment. The Committee also opined that the university librarian and his staff 'should not be burdened with part-time teaching work'. This has deprived the departments of library science in some universities of the opportunity to utilise the services of some excellent teachers to the detriment of the trainees.

**F**ortunately, most of the universities have ignored this pointless advice. It is noteworthy that both the university librarians who were members of this Committee and were signatories to this recommendation have continued to ignore it summarily. But, the most retrogressive recommendation pertains to the establishment of the departmental libraries. After listing the many drawbacks they inevitably ensure, the Committee proceeded merrily to recommend their establishment with a 'permanent loan of about 2,000 volumes further supplemented by another floating loan of 100 volumes. Besides leaving intact the privileges of teachers to borrow more books from the central collection.

Since an average Indian University can boast of only a lakh of volumes and of 20 to 25 university departments, the end result of implementing this re-

commendation, by a simple arithmetical operation, would be that the best half of the library's resources would be physically removed and dispersed in diverse directions to be sequestered in locked cupboards to be used only during restricted hours on 'working days' only. What is left behind would mostly be unreadable junk. The university library would be reduced to a monumental dormitory, holding dated and discarded material unwanted by university departments, instead of being a lively intellectual centre where eager scholars and keen teachers could foregather.

**T**he psychological principle of the 'sympathy of numbers' too would stand jettisoned. Interdisciplinary studies, now rightly in the forefront in all progressive institutions of higher learning, would receive a crippling blow. Our very limited resources would be frittered away in wasteful duplication, increasing loss and disuse of books and avoidable addition of administrative burdens on the heads of the departments owing to the inevitable 'anapoorna' style of the working of these collections. I am willing to be instructed as to how a clerk-managed or a teacher supervised departmental library located in some isolated place in a department with inadequate staff, and functioning for a limited number of days and that too mostly during the few office hours (all this to keep the cost of its running low) can constitute a better arrangement and render superior service to what a university library with its large book collection, not only in focal subjects but also in fringe disciplines, ably supported by costly reference tools with its well qualified staff, commodious accommodation, good furniture, well lighted and ventilated and available for 12 hours a day all the year round, can render.

The only possible justification for setting up a departmental collection is that the department is physically so located away

from the central library that the distance acts as a distinct damper on the teachers and students of the department preventing them from fully utilising the rich resources of the library. Such a condition is not presumed in the report, and is by no means ubiquitous.

So much for this 'historic' report and the unsupported and unfounded allegation that its recommendations have been nullified by the Commission itself.

The U.G.C. has now set up a 12 member Library Committee under the chairmanship of Professor A. R. Wadia whose primary objectives are:

- i) to review the working and organisational set-up of university libraries and
- ii) to examine how far current techniques of training in library science are adequate to meet the growing needs of university and college libraries.

The Committee consists of the Library Adviser to the Government of India, the Librarian of the National Library, three University Librarians (who are also Professors of Library Science), one Vice-Chancellor, two University Professors, the Director of an IIT, the Secretary of the U.G.C. and a senior officer from the Commission. Forty per cent of the members of the Ranganathan Committee are members of this Committee also. The 'Indian School of Library Thought' is also represented.

To allege, therefore, that this Committee has been appointed the 'ostensible object of reviewing the earlier proposals' and that it 'is comprised of several senior librarians whose objectivity is widely disputed in professional circles' is, to say the least, uncharitable and fallacious. Support, however, has been sought by quoting a statement supposedly made at the Committee's preliminary sitting. A verification of the record reveals that the correct

statement is as under: 'It was pointed out that some University Libraries were in disarray consequent on the reclassification of books without proper planning of the programme' (italic mine).

What quarrel can there be with this statement of fact?

The true basis of criticism regarding the composition of the Committee seems to be that many librarians who have an immense faith in their own competency and seniority are unhappy in not having been appointed as members. In any case to condemn the Committee's likely recommendations which are yet to be formulated before they are made public betrays a biased mind. It does not go to establish the Committee's malafides and in truth the Committee has some of the finest men in the profession.

This Committee, unlike the previous one, which had in all only five members, has endeavoured to seek further advice and support from a large number of experienced workers through ad hoc sub-committees, to study specific problems. This ought to cancel any lingering doubts about the sincerity of the Committee to deliver the goods.

I have always been intrigued and amused by the patriotic cock-crow about the 'Indian School of Library Thought', for science is international in scope and library science is no exception. I have not heard of British, German or French Schools of Library Thought. This is a discipline which aims to organise and service all human knowledge produced at all times, in all climes and in all languages. Its scope and treatment, therefore, is truly universal. How its study and operation can be profitably narrowed and successfully cramped into a national or regional framework eludes me.

While I can appreciate the existence of an Indian system of Philosophy (we have six of them) and an Indian system of Medicine

(we have the Ayurvedic School), the analogy cannot be extended to librarianship without doing violence to its pervasive essence. What obviously is meant by this slogan is the burning zeal for the scheme of classification and cataloguing fabricated in India. The obvious inferences are that such of Indian librarians as do not promote them are deplorably deficient in national fervour and they betray 'more ignorance than knowledge of the latest techniques'.

I have had the good fortune of working for many years both with Dewey and Colon. Currently, I am operating the latter. Personally, I consider it a highly sophisticated and theory-oriented scheme. It would be futile to enter here into a discussion of its merits and demerits. Suffice it to say that while the drawbacks of Dewey have been extensively probed and debated and the users made amply aware of them, the Colon has yet to receive that searching scrutiny from those who have been using it for long. When a university librarian in western India tried to attempt it, he at once became the target of ridicule and his exercise came to an abrupt end. The literature on Colon is mostly from the master's hand. Ten years ago I had pleaded for the production of graded text-books and self-study manuals on this scheme from those qualified librarians who have been using this scheme and the teachers teaching it. Nothing satisfying has yet emerged. The only one inch thick volume that has come out is largely a string of quotations from the Padmashree's writings with a minimum of conjunctive sentences. The master has been ill-served by the chellars who do nothing beyond drum-beating about the 'Indian School of Library Thought'.

I find it difficult to equate a new scheme of classification and cataloguing with an 'Indian School of Library Thought'. While it may be conceded that

the disciples, the followers and the admirers of a great teacher or leader or creed can lay claim to being collectively termed a school, they cannot appropriate 'national' colours without provoking raised eye-brows. Perhaps, in the present case the correct battle-cry would be 'Indian Scholasticism of Library Thought'. Librarianship is much greater than the art of classification and cataloguing which with us have been blown up beyond all measure in their importance. The technique of classification has become a compulsive obsession with the library workers in India during the past two decades. It has landed this forward-looking and service-oriented discipline into a quagmire from which it needs to be rescued forthwith.

Paeans of praise have been sung elsewhere, about the 'most advanced' training for librarianship in this country, initiated largely due to the farsightedness of Dr. Ranganathan. Dark hints have also been dropped about the back-stage conspiracies being constantly hatched to 'sabotage the present system of library education' with the over-active support of foreigners. I have been a teacher all these years (but alas, not now) and have headed a University Department of Library Science for several years and I hold the diametrically opposite view, and the vast majority of my colleagues in the profession agree with me. The subject of training has been discussed during the past few years at all levels, in seminars, conferences and symposia ad infinitum and ad nauseam. Admission criteria in university departments of library science still differ widely. One university admits only five students to its M. Lib. Sc. course while another admits many times that ceiling. The Delhi University does not recognise the library science degree of a sister university whose teaching department is headed by a former National Librarian.

surprises. In a century-old university, hardly 49% students pass out in their degree course without even one candidate getting a first class, whereas in some universities the pass percentage invariably exceeds 90 with more than half the successful candidates securing a first class. The general consensus has been that there is something radically wrong with the training imparted, for the end products that emerge are found to be well-nigh unsuitable and unemployable. If mere specification prescription of advanced and theoretical syllabi could raise the standard of teaching and education, revolutionary progress would have been achieved by now. No such happy result is in evidence, for in any final analysis it is the excellence of teaching and the high grade trainees that really matter—neither of which are much in evidence.

At a recent Delhi Seminar on the 'Teaching of Library Science' it was announced with pride that a certain university department had trained 124 masters in library science. A participant thereupon pointed out that the same university was not able to recruit a reader from its own masterly products and the post continued to be re-advertised.

In fact, therefore, if a proper evaluation is made of the quality of library training that is now being imparted in most of our library schools and the products that are turned out from most of these degree mills, the only sane measure that would suggest itself is to close some of them down. Instead, they continue to proliferate from year to year, because they have become status symbols which can be got and maintained at little cost. We conveniently forget that the trouble with a cheap education is that we never stop paying for it.

Powerful support has been sought by invoking Ranganathan's hallowed name regarding the 'most advanced' quality of training

imparted. The true condition, however, is pointed out by the learned doctor himself. In 1964, he was constrained to record that 'great misgivings are developing in me about the training given to librarians in our country of late. These misgivings emanate from my experience as a member of several selection committees. The candidates seem to have got through the examination by cramming a few notes. . . I am particularly concerned with the reactions and remarks of the non-professional members on the selection committees. Although they are differential to me in expressing it explicitly, they seem to develop a feeling that all the training of librarians is a fraud. . .'

That the malaise has now become perceptibly cancerous is amply established by the following candid but masterly diagnosis by the doctor, published in April, 1969: 'It has now become a matter of prestige for a university librarian or a university authority to conduct courses for B.Lib.Sc. and M.Lib.Sc. degrees. . . Nor do they respect the law of supply and demand, so essential in admission to a professional course. . . The situation is even more deplorable in respect of M.Lib.Sc. course. There is no research orientation among the teachers. As some students remark, teaching in many of the subjects in M.Lib.Sc. course is at the same level as that of B.Lib.Sc. course. . . It is equally bad to revel in theory and in technique leaving readers to themselves.'

At this stage I should state that I hold no brief for the U.G.C. It must, however, be acknowledged that the Commission has during the past decade or so, given considerable monetary support to the university libraries. Phenomenal progress has been registered in the book stock, equipment and construction of new buildings. About seven crore rupees have been paid to the universities on this account up to 1968. But all these sums have not been wisely spent. In many cases, they have

In the matter of examination results, one discovers even more

only engendered bloated physical growth. A lot of the expenditure on buildings has been wasted. The government's Library Advisor has candidly opined that 'there has been a uniform failure in quality as far the expenditures on the buildings are concerned'.

**B**ook selection has been haphazard and lopsided. A close study would reveal that much of the reading material that gets acquired is the result of high pressure salesmanship by the representatives of foreign publishing houses, sometimes exercised through local booksellers. There is also much wasteful duplication. In one university, the department of geology was split up into pure geology and applied geology to keep two warring colleagues apart. Never to be outdone, one Head would buy the identical material for his department which the other had acquired. Another university library thought it fit to buy a duplicate set of Chemical Abstracts. Many such instances are available. The ready availability of costly reprints of back volumes of journals has rendered the job of utilizing book grants easy.

No guidelines exist for acquiring little used and highly-priced material, by universities that function in close vicinity to one another. We do not even have elementary union catalogues to provide a clue as to what journals and back volumes exist and where. The poor shape of at least two of the Central University Libraries which the U.G.C. itself looks after, is known to all. In one, as many enquiries have been ordered as the number of visitations by foreign experts in the other. While in the former, the book collection has been chopped down to a state of mince-meat by innumerable partitions, the latter is currently lurching through the dual shocks of indigestion as a result of an over-dose of foreign grants and the library staff staging a whole-sale strike.

The Commission's declared policy regarding departmental

libraries, already touched upon, has proved fatal to the growth of many university libraries at their present initial stage of development. The casual way in which the needs of these libraries are assessed by the Commission's quinquennial visiting committees, provides the most effective rebuttal to the repeated solemn declarations that the library is the heart of the university. This committee, whose membership never includes a librarian, hardly devotes ten minutes to visit and assess the university library's needs for the next five years.

**T**here is much loose talk about 'research' in our universities and colleges today. This is an interesting subject which has many facets. I can only touch on its library aspects here.

It is astounding but true that on an average the number of volumes that an American University library yearly adds to its already ambitious book-stock, averages the total holdings of an Indian University library. Our condition, therefore, in regard to high-grade post-graduate teaching and doctoral research is, indeed, pitiable, for besides making large acquisitions in English, we have also to acquire material in classical and national/regional languages. In the face of paucity of funds, aggravated by the devaluation of the rupee, academic apathy and a moribund examination system manage however to keep the present system going.

By international standards, our library collections are so inadequate as to hardly support any worthwhile research in topics other than indigenous. Even in this field, the American Book Procurement Centre has ensured that more university libraries in the USA will have better library resources on India than a similar number within our own country. It is now imperative for a scholar doing quality research on India to knock at the doors of libraries in the U.K. and USA. This is a sad and sorry state of affairs. It has arisen out of callous official neg-

lect. My pleadings before the Kothari Commission to recommend that select university libraries for government publications went un-heeded. While we have today more than half a dozen depositary collections for U.N. publications, a similar situation does not exist for our government publications which are the best source material for social science research.

As regards other subject fields, what more eloquent commentary can we cite than a reference from the speech of the Commission's Chairman delivered at the 1967 conference of the Vice-Chancellors that, 'The situation in the universities and colleges regarding availability of even indispensable books and journals, always far from satisfactory, is now near deplorable. There are post-graduate departments in colleges which hardly subscribe to a learned journal.' It is sad to find that more such departments continue to come into existence from year to year, in response to unintelligent regional pressures.

**T**he witty but perceptive educational columnist of the *Times of India* (26-1-69) has aptly opined that 'the University Grants Commission has functioned like the biblical rain that rains upon the just and the unjust alike'. The Commission, whose statutory responsibility it is to raise educational standards has so far been content to be a paternal distributor of largesse to a fast multiplying progeny, both institutional and individual. In this pleasant exercise, excellence occasionally gets neglected and flummery supported. I rest content by quoting one example from the same source (11-7-69). It states that 'the University Grants Commission which found money for the dubious project of parapsychology in Jaipur, which its own experts have denounced, was unable to support (a) venture in scholarly documentation'.

How and why is it that our academic libraries have been



unable to project an image commensurate in quality with the monetary support they have received? Firstly, our continuing and unwavering faith in 'money' alone is truly pathetic. The quality of the worker matters but little. Secondly, the facile way we explain things away and ladle out blame to others is truly remarkable. A severely adverse notice has been taken of the role of the 'foreigner' in our library perspective. In all fairness, it must be stated that their help has been solicited and not foisted. It certainly bespeaks our inferiority complex, even in this area.

**B**y and large, however, the profession has not been corrupted by this. Rather, it has benefitted in a variety of ways. A sizable number of librarians have been invited abroad. This has broadened their mental and library horizons to the ultimate benefit of their institutions. The U.S.I.S. and the British Council have been running libraries in various centres which, besides being widely patronised, serve as workable models for other libraries. The U.S.I.S. has continually supported professional library activities by organising them itself or financing other institutions for holding seminars etc.

An important recommendation (No. 142) made by the Ranganathan Committee to the U.G.C. in its 1959 report was to arrange 'a conference consisting of a few representatives of publishers, booksellers, the library profession' etc. The first such conference was organized by the U.S.I.S. in Bombay in 1964. The 1967 Sapru House seminar on 'Social Science Research and Library Development in India' which recommended that a Social Science Documentation Centre should be established in India was reportedly financed by the U.S.I.S., Delhi. To insinuate ulterior motives smacks of ingratitude.

While it is true that our educational experts never miss an

occasion to declaim about the library being the first priority in our educational endeavour, we librarians have done precious little to educate and enthuse them to act out what they publicly profess. In fact, we have hardly done enough to justify the faculty scales and status conferred on us. We clamour for recognition and respect without having earned them, as if these can be got by a mere fiat. In the past, the librarian generally was an acknowledged scholar. The emphasis since has shifted to his being an efficient library administrator.

Today, the average Indian academic is neither the one nor the other. Unless both these qualities are happily blended in a librarian, he cannot be looked up to with much respect. A true librarian is a teacher of teachers. He is an idea-consultant. That there is an acute dearth of such leaders is evidenced by the highly indifferent and mostly unreadable library literature (most of which is in English) published in this country. It lacks both idea-content and style. Even the 'rehash' job is done sloppily. Bibliography and documentation which constitute the preliminary step towards solid scholarship barely exist with us. The tardy services rendered by the National Library have earned for it much public censure.

**O**ur continued reliance on the government, with the consequent dampening of individual initiative is unavailing. University librarians who ought to provide dynamic leadership to the profession by virtue of their status seem to be satisfied with merely performing their daily chores. Some have failed to achieve even this much. This lack of leadership is evidenced by a sizable number of unfilled posts of librarians in universities with the result that several retired gentlemen have been re-harnessed (not unwillingly though) for these heavy responsibilities.

The current anti-intellectual zeit-geist of the profession can also be inferred from the thin attend-

ance at the annual conferences and seminars of the library associations. These yearly rituals are full of boredom, because the same people talk the same things, everywhere. The only excitement they provide is when elections are under way. The story of the two Academic Libraries Associations started a few years ago, is still more depressing. The Library Science Teachers' Association aborted at the very dinner table at which it was born, in the Maiden's Hotel. The Academic Libraries Association has done absolutely nothing during the past quinquennium.

**S**ince in our library system today, the academic libraries are the only ones with a proper organisational base and regular monetary support, their proper future growth is a matter of importance. The Wadia Committee has, therefore, raised many expectations. Let us hope its recommendations will be such as to propel the university and college libraries to a take-off stage. The Committee should enunciate proper norms for book grants. Even the Kothari Commission has done scant justice here. It has suggested that 'a university should spend each year Rs 25 for each student registered and Rs 300 per teacher'. Two decades back, the Radhakrishnan Commission had suggested a higher sum. As the rupee has been devalued twice and the cost of books and journals too has risen by more than 75 per cent since that recommendation was made, a proper figure would be of Rs 100 per student and Rs 500 per teacher.

The Committee should seriously explore the grant of access to book-stock in college and university libraries for adult education purposes and correspondence course students. Until such time as an efficient public library network gets built up, such libraries may serve them in return for suitable additional financial support. The Committee should impress upon the Union and State governments the compelling necessity of making the university



libraries depository centres for publications issued by them.

While the beneficiaries of the staff formula have so far been mostly the libraries of the Central Universities, its implementation, after suitable rectification, in other university and college libraries is now long over-due.

The Committee should also ensure that the university librarian is granted a status equivalent to the head of the university department owing direct responsibility to the Vice-Chancellor. He should be a member of all academic bodies commensurate with the high academic and administrative responsibilities he is expected to discharge.

With a view to assisting and guiding the university libraries properly, the Commission itself should have a library development wing headed by a mature librarian who can successfully undertake this difficult job. The Commission should also set up a standing library committee which may advise it on all matters concerning the working and development of university and college libraries. Further, every quinquennial visiting committee should have a librarian on it to ensure that this vital aspect of the university's academic growth is not neglected.

The Committee ought to give serious thought to the high postal costs involved in inter-library loans. This is a matter about which sympathetic understanding by the concerned Union ministers and postal authorities at the highest level, has to be achieved. Efforts should be made so that all material got on inter-library loan is treated by the postal authorities on a par with literature for the blind.

The Committee should among various other important matters take some bold decisions about library education. If it is to succeed, a closer involvement in teaching by such qualified and experienced members of the university library staff, as have the

necessary mental apparatus and aptitude, is indispensable.

The Committee fortunately has ready access to many fine and recent foreign reports in this field. The 1967 Parry Report from the U.K. is an excellent document to draw upon. Similar helpful studies from other English-speaking countries are also available. The unanimous recommendations made at the First National Seminar of University Librarians (1965) too would be helpful to the Committee. Finally, if Professor Paul Buck's brief address entitled 'Looking Ahead' (in his *Libraries and Universities*, Harvard, 1964) is made required reading for every member of the Committee, it would undoubtedly enable him to focus successfully the central issues in a proper perspective.

One is led to the inescapable conclusion that the many and varied challenges to Indian librarianship have so far been met in rather a puerile and half-threatened manner. The profession is still riven into warring factions (gravitating around powerful personalities). It is high time that it is rescued from this quagmire.

Are there no silver linings to this picture of unrelieved gloom? There, fortunately, are. The services rendered by the INSDOC, and the IASLIC, etc., are praiseworthy. The ILA is feebly endeavouring to rouse itself. Some oases of excellence in book collections and services are available. It is embarrassing to name them. The present spurt in the documentation activities in this country is praiseworthy. The recent establishment of a National Social Science Documentation Centre is a happy augury. The decision to set up national medical and agricultural libraries are moves in the right direction. The U.G.C.'s second Library Committee may after all provide courageous guidelines in spite of the many forebodings of its declared detractors. But until we have a regional and national public library system, we will not have arrived. There is so much work to do.

# Social science documentation

J. SAHA

THE two world wars during the century accelerated the scientific and technological development which helped rapid industrialisation both in developed and developing countries. The momentum gained in scientific research during the second war (1939-1945) and the launching of 'Sputnik', the artificial satellite, in October 1957 brought a new era in science and technological research. The big powers are now gearing a large part of their national resources for advancement in space research and overall supremacy in science and technology. The developing countries which gained independence after the world war or later also began to give particular attention to the programme of scientific research which is essentially a process for industrial development in the country.

The increased government expenditure on scientific research in India reflects the growth and development of research in science and technology in the country. Within one decade (1952/53 to 1961/62) the total government expenditure on scientific research increased from Rs. 112 million to Rs. 469 million. The rate of increase over the period 1952-53 to 1957-58 was 17 per cent and after 1957-58 it was 15 per cent per annum. The share of research expenditure allotted to the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the central body to programme and co-ordinate the research on science and technology from Rs. 20 million to Rs. 81 million over the same period (1952/53 to 1961/62). The government formulated the science research policy and gave all priorities to establish and develop the scientific laboratories and institutions to step up the technological progress and rapid industrialization of the country.

The effect of industrialization and the consequential social trans-

formation focused increased attention on the studies and research in different areas of social sciences during the last two decades but the corresponding data on increased expenditure on social science research are not readily available to measure the increased activities. Further, there has been no attempt to make a general survey of or to co-ordinate the social science research in the country. The increased attention to teaching and research in several disciplines of the social sciences however can be evidenced from the fact that all the 62 Indian universities have departments providing facilities for teaching and research in some field of the social sciences. The Central and State Governments and the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission are providing some funds to the universities for social studies and acceleration of research in social sciences in general.

To accelerate and co-ordinate the research activities in one or all subjects covered under social sciences, it is essential that the current activities are recorded in a systematic manner and disseminated for wider communication. No attempt, however, has yet been made by the social scientists or documentalists to write trend reports and disseminate the progress of research in different disciplines of the social sciences such as sociology, social psychology, criminology, cultural and social anthropology, population studies and demography, economics, statistics, public administration, political science, international relations, international law, economic and social history, human, economic and political geography. Nor has any attempt been made by the social scientists to record and store systematically the social data made available in the process

of numerous surveys and experiments.

In the absence of a central body to co-ordinate and disseminate the research activities in different disciplines of the social sciences, the information is lying scattered in the annual reports of the research centres, in reports of the Inter-University Board and articles in current periodicals. The UNESCO Research Centre on Social and Economic Development in Southern Asia is attempting to disseminate the social science research activities in the region since 1952 but their bibliographic publications are not comprehensive either in scope or in character. The reports of the two Education Commissions, appointed by the Government of India, contain some perfunctory information with regard to social science research in India.

The identifiable sources of data on social science research in India are: (i) the social science research institutions, and (ii) the social science research departments or units attached to some institutions which are not exclusively concerned with social science research. But there is no complete and up-to-date inventory of the institutions or departments engaged in studies and research in the different areas of social sciences. The UNESCO Research Centre on Social and Economic Development in Southern Asia brought out a directory 'Social Science Research in Southern Asia: a Directory of Institutions' in 1965. The directory recorded 45 social science research institutions and 96 social science research departments in India, and also gave information on the scope, size and facilities available at each centre. The Social Science Research Committee appointed by the Planning Commission, Government of India, in its report in 1968, listed 44 institutions and 148 departments or units engaged in studies and research in different areas of social sciences.

To get a general idea of the state of social science research in

India the social scientists and others may be interested in an analysis of the data presented in the UNESCO Directory published in 1965. Though there is no information about the budgetary provisions or financial expenditure of individual institutions or departments to estimate the overall expenditure on social science research in the country, the data on growth, size and available resources in these centres, however, may help to get a broad picture of the present position and also to formulate a programme for future development.

The table at the end gives the size of the collection and the number of current periodicals received in the libraries in order to give an idea of the resources available in the centres to facilitate the research activities. It may be seen that 90 of these libraries or about 64 per cent have a collection of less than 15,000 volumes and receive less than 300 current periodicals.

Though the average size, scope and library facilities of the research centres are very inadequate to meet the research needs, there are a few institutions which are fairly big and have earned international reputation as centres for higher learning and pioneering research in different fields of the social sciences.

The documentation service provided by some of the bigger institutions are in the form of compilation and restricted circulation of documentation lists which serve as a sort of current awareness service to the researchers attached to those institutions. There has been however no attempt to coordinate the documentation activities to meet the demand of the social scientists at large. The social scientists, documentalists and librarians are fully aware of the situation and discussed the various problems in social science documentation at several seminars and meetings where the librarians and

social scientists participated with equal enthusiasm.

The first seminar with a view to assessing the library resources and documentation services available to the social scientists was organized by the Indian School of International Studies in early 1959. Since then the same subject made the focal point for discussions at several seminars and conferences held under the auspices of the Indian Library Association (ILA) and the Indian Association of Special Libraries and Information Centres (IASLIC). In the absence of data on the state of research, the resources in the libraries and the extent of documentation facilities available or needed for active participation in research activities, no definite programme, however, could be formulated for implementation.

The deliberations at these meetings were mostly confined to locating the problems of research in social sciences so far as these relate to availability and use of basic source materials and identified the following as a probable solution:

- (i) location of materials and their bibliographical control,
- (ii) acquisition of fresh material in a more systematic manner,
- (iii) servicing of reading materials, social data and information on a co-operative basis; and
- (iv) establishment of a central body for co-ordinating the documentation services needed for research in social sciences.

At all the meetings the participants also debated the advantages and disadvantages of the centralized vs decentralized set-up of the documentation services but could not make any decision as arguments in favour or against each were found to be equally strong. Girja Kumar's working paper 'Library Development in India: Retrospect and Prospect' presented at the seminar on

Social Science Research and Library Development in India held under the joint auspices of the Indian Council of World Affairs and the Indian School of International Studies in February 1967 is a well documented record of activities and awareness on the need to systematize the library and documentation services in different areas of the social sciences.

The social scientists and librarians who participated at the seminar stressed the need for establishing the Social Science Research Council in India to promote and co-ordinate the research activities in different areas of social sciences. The seminar also considered the desirability of the establishment of a central library of social sciences, or alternatively, the coordination of the major specialized libraries in the country under an integrated national programme to provide efficient documentation services needed for research.

The Government of India also gradually felt the need for social science research policy for guiding programmes of planned national development and in 1965 set up a committee of experts under the chairmanship of Dr V. K. R.V. Rao to review the status of research in social sciences in India and to make recommendations regarding their future line of development including organizational steps necessary to promote coordination and inter-disciplinary approach in the research. Following the recommendations of the expert committee the Government of India established the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research in December 1968, a national organization for the purpose of promoting and co-ordinating research in the social sciences. The government also agreed to provide more liberal funds to support and also to promote inter-disciplinary approach in social science research in general through the newly created body (ICSSR).

The international conference on comparative research on social

changes and regional disparity within and between nations, held in New Delhi in 1967 under the sponsorship of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, and the International Social Sciences Council, Paris, in one of its recommendations stressed the need for a data inventory on social sciences in India and other countries in Southern Asia. The Sociological Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute made a formal agreement with the International Social Science Council of the UNESCO to investigate and submit by March 1969 a statement towards the realization of an inventory of Indian quantitative data in social sciences. The project report 'Data Inventory of Social Sciences-India' prepared by the Sociological Research Unit of the Indian Statistical Institute is a valuable document to guide the functioning of the data inventory centre.

The establishment of the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) with the objectives and the responsibility to encourage both fundamental and applied research in social sciences and to co-ordinate the survey and research activities programmed in different social science research centres will probably have solved many of the problems identified by the social scientists. To fulfil the objectives one of the major functions of the ICSSR would be to develop and support documentation centres and data centres for the dissemination and retrieval of the information and retrieval of the information on social sciences which may be useful as an integration of widely scattered approaches in data collection, data processing, data analysis, and theory formation.

The establishment of a Social Science Documentation Centre is essential and there can be no argument against it. The vital issue is how the documentation centre organizes its function to attain its objectives: whether to function as the central body for co-ordinating

and promoting standardization of the documentation activities in different areas of social science in big research centres or to fall into line with the Indian National Scientific Documentation Centres (INSDOC) to serve the scientists and researchers directly.

The documentation activities have now been extended beyond bibliographic searches or routine retrieval activities. Content analysis of current periodical literature, analysis and synthesis of the pertinent literature for preparing digests and reviews, writing trend reports now fall within the functions of documentation. To attain such functions at a higher intellectual level and to create new literature for research communication, it is more and more realised that the documentalist and the subject specialist should work in a team as equal partners.

The Committee on Social Science Research set up a working group to examine and submit a report on documentation services. In the report the working group very correctly recommended that the ICSSR should co-ordinate and support, where needed, the documentation activities which have already been initiated in several institutions and which come up to certain prescribed standards of quality and performance. The working group also stressed the need to undertake compilation of Union Catalogue of social science serials in major libraries of the country. The Union Catalogue will help to command the available resources in the country and to develop the network concept for information retrieval activities and also to programme the future acquisition at individual library level as well as at national level. The Committee on Social Science Research also recommended the establishment of a Data Centre or Data Bank to integrate the research co-ordination as programmed policy of the ICSSR which will be linked with a Computer Centre for the storage, retrieval and analysis of

data collected in the process of social surveys and investigations.

The prime objective of the Data Centre will be storing the data derived from social surveys sponsored by the government departments, commercial organizations and research institutions, and to make the data available to others besides the original sponsors. The bringing together of data from surveys which would otherwise be scattered, or destroyed after primary analysis, will therefore have a 'multiplier effect' in increasing the information to be obtained by secondary analysis. The Data Centre, in addition to providing facilities for secondary analysis, will increasingly be of help to any one planning a social survey with the information about what of relevance has already been done and codes for comparability with other surveys. The Data Centre, oriented mainly towards the crea-

tion of a basis of social and political aggregate data, will provide a data basis and a common empirical framework for the major bulk of research projects that are being carried on in different social science research centres. It is expected that the Centre will in due course conduct research on standardizing the coding of key variables, including the possibility of recording deposited data into standard forums using sophisticated computer facilities.

The documentation centre or centres and the data centre will come up in the near future under the able guidance of the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research to facilitate the research in different areas of social sciences.

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TABLE

Size of the Library Collection in Social Science Research Centres in India

numbers	general	social anthropology	social psychology	political science	economics & statistics	public administration	education & social work	total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Less than 5000	7	6	4	3	27	2	4	53
5000— 10,000	3	6	2		12	1	3	27
10,001— 15,000	2			1	6		1	10
15,001— 20,000	2	1			6		1	10
20,001— 25,000					4			4
25,001— 30,000	2							2
30,001— 40,000					1		1	2
40,001— 50,000	1				1		1	3
50,001— 60,000								
60,001— 70,000	1							1
70,001— 80,000		1		1				2
80,001— 90,000				1				1
90,001—100,000	2				1			3
above 100,000					1			1
Depending on Univ. Lib. facilities		2		2	6			10
Data not available	3	2	2	2	3			12
Total	23	18	8	10	68	3	11	141

# The system

S. R. RANGANATHAN

FOR centuries, the formation and the maintenance of libraries were in the hands of royalty and the aristocracy of birth and power. Prestige and the urge to collect and preserve seem to have been the chief motives. Another agency was the aristocracy of religion and of intellect. Churches and temples collected libraries for the use of the learned priests. Places of learning also collected libraries for their restricted use. In either case, it looked as if the Anti-First Law 'Books are for Preservation' and the Anti-Second Law 'Books for the Chosen Few' seem to have been the guiding principles.

But during the last one century, democracy has been gradually replacing aristocracy. It is now slowly insisting on the privilege of one and all. Education is being gradually made universal. The right of everybody to educate, entertain, and inform himself through free access to books is being put into practice. This is being done in each country. India too has just begun to fall in line.

The delay of nearly a century in taking up the free book service for all should be taken advantage of in India. We should learn from the difficulties experienced by the other countries that had started earlier. In those countries, the public library system was developed casually. Till a few decades ago, the library organisation of a town, a State, or a country was largely a rule-of-thumb affair. From 1924, I began to study the wastage involved in this casual method of development. The need for placing the library organisation of a country on a scientific basis was keenly felt by me. But, at that time, there was no library science as such. There were no fundamental laws from which valid conclusions could be made about library organisation and other library matters, so as to suit

the peculiar conditions of each country.

In most countries, the casual method of planning the library system of a country was still persisting. The inefficiency of the working of the library system in the country caused by this was not fully realised. In fact, there was not as much return on the money invested in the library system of a country as there could be.

This situation provoked me to think out and formulate a set of fundamental laws of library science as guiding principles. I succeeded in this in 1928. These fundamental laws were published by the Madras Library Association in 1931, in a book entitled *Five Laws of Library Science*. The following are the laws:

1. Books are for Use,
2. Every Reader its Book;
3. Every Book its Reader;
4. Save the Time of the Reader; and
5. A Library is a Growing Organism.

These five laws are now acknowledged by many countries in the world as of great importance. In fact, one British librarian remarked that we need not hereafter drift along, but could proceed systematically along scientific lines.

The five laws of library science have made it clear that it is futile to give an independent library to each locality. We should no longer speak of 'a library', but only of 'a library system'. This idea is the result of the application of the five laws of library science to the problem of public library organisation. The first four laws float, as it were, with their heads above the clouds and their feet above the ground. But, law 5 acts as a controller. It knows that

everything in the world needs finance. It knows also how difficult it is to get finance—and particularly for library purposes. Therefore, it chastens the other four laws to come to an agreement in such a way that all of them can be satisfied at the least cost.

**T**oday, what we want is library systems and no isolated libraries. The five laws have taught us that no city, with a population cluster of less than 100,000 is a viable unit for a city library system of its own. All the other towns, villages, and hamlets in a district should hang together and form a district library system of their own. Further, it is a waste to provide a separate library staff and library building for a branch library in a place, unless it has a minimum population cluster of 5,000. Viability requires that all the smaller places should be served only periodically by a travelling library. But even then, all the laws of library science will not be satisfied. All the city library systems and all the district library systems of a constituent State should hang together with the State Central Library as the apex, and use it as the reservoir library for the occasionally needed books.

All the local libraries—whether public libraries or academic libraries or specialist libraries—will be denoted by the term 'service library'. A service library should not purchase books not actually needed by its clientele sufficiently often. Further, it should not retain on its shelves either out-of-date books or books no longer in demand. These should be weeded out periodically. This is the direction of law five. But all the copies of all the weeded out books should not be indiscriminately thrown away. The State Central Library should be allowed to select one fairly sound copy of all the books weeded out by the service libraries of the State, for preservation on its own shelves to meet the occasional demands of the future—which may be even merely for

bibliographical purposes. This is the direction of law two. This section of the State Central Library may be called the dormitory library of the State. Thus, the State Central Library will have a reservoir wing functioning as service library and a dormitory wing.

There should also be a State Copyright Library for legal purposes. This should also serve the cultural purpose of being a depository of the intellectual output of the people of the State. To prevent its copy of a book being worn out by the usual great demand for a few years after its publication, no book of the Copyright Library should be thrown open to the public till after 20 years of its publication. In the case of a newly published book required by readers, the Act should provide for the State Central Library claiming another copy of such a book from the publisher. This is the joint direction of laws two and three. As it has been done by Mysore with the concurrence of the Union Government, the Public Libraries Act of each constituent State should make provisions in respect of the State Copyright Library.

**I**nter-library loans should be a regular feature. It is a sin to keep a book idle in one library for month after month and make some other library spend money to buy another copy of it for its reader. It is bad in finance. It is bad in national economy. That is the message of law five. To secure this kind of co-ordination and co-operation, legislative sanction is necessary. That is why public libraries' acts are being insisted upon today.

Here, again, the old composite State of Madras has made library history in India. It was the first State to have a Public Libraries Act. The Madras Library Association played a leading part in preparing the ground for this. A few persons, who took the services of the Madras University Library as students or as young men, became ministers as soon as

we attained Independence. They had tasted the value of a good library service. Even in 1946, Shri Avinashlingam asked me to give him a draft library bill. It was given. It became an Act in 1948. This Act was adapted by Andhra Pradesh when it was made a separate State. But, it is now outmoded by 20 years; and we have learnt much more as to how to make a public library organisation give the best result at the least cost. I should invite the attention of the Governments of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh to one point.

**T**here is a grave fault in the Madras Act (1948) which I should like to mention here. The library needs—the book needs—of the people of the cities are substantially different from those of the people living in rural areas. We need not go into the reasons for it. But it is a fact of experience. Therefore, it is wrong to mix together into one district library system the provision for library service for cities as well as for rural areas. A city library system should be different to a District library system both in organisation and in service. In 1948, Shri Avinashlingam explained to me a certain financial expediency which led him to deviate from my Bill and mix the two systems. This financial expediency no longer exists, as a result of a great change in the tax pattern which has occurred in the country during the last 20 years.

Full advantage of this fact has been taken by the Mysore Public Libraries Act (1965) and it has separated city library systems from district library systems. I very much wish that the governments of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh should examine this question and rectify the fault in their Act. Kerala is said to be preparing a new Library Bill adapting the Mysore Act to its own special conditions.

The State of Maharashtra had its library legislation recently. But, it is unfortunate that it

should have been based neither on science nor on experience. It is an anomalous Act. It is largely based on the report of the wartime Fyzee Committee. In 1948, Bal Gangadhar Kher, the then Chief Minister of Bombay agreed with me that the Report was not on sound lines and that he would take proper care at the time of legislation. But unfortunately he did not live long enough to do so. Now, evidently, lack of either library experience or a sound knowledge of library science appears to have misled the government to base its library bill on that Fyzee Report. This is unfortunate.

It is time that the other constituent States took up library legislation. I myself have provided draft library bills to many of them. In spite of a general enthusiasm for the provision of public library service, neither the government nor the library profession in those States have begun to think seriously of the wastage involved in their setting apart large sums of money for public library service without securing, through proper legislation, that the State gets an adequate social return on the money so spent.

India is a vast country. The integration of its library system should be taken to the national level. Until about twenty years ago, the practice was for each country to have a single National Central Library. This is now found to be too unwieldy to be of use. Therefore, the present trend is to replace it by a system of national central libraries. Denmark has a separate Central Library for the natural sciences and for the other subjects respectively. UK too has begun to move in this direction. The USA has separate National Central Libraries for agriculture and medicine. India is already moving slightly in this direction, though unconsciously. We have made a beginning with the natural sciences, agriculture, and medicine. The National Library founded at the beginning of the present century

may be restricted to the humanities. Each National Central Library should also have the same preservation and dormitory function for the country as a whole, as a State Central Library has for its State. This function should be only in respect of its subject-field.

In addition, there should be one National Copyright Library on the lines of a State Copyright Library. Three of the present four National Copyright Deposits should be abolished. They serve no purpose. They are too costly to maintain. They are reported to be degenerating into mere book dumps collecting dust and inviting insects to feed on them.

The Union Government had not been properly advised in respect of the Delivery of Books Act (1954), which provided for four National Copyright Libraries. Due consideration had not been given to the realistic implications of an annual addition of about 25,000 publications to each of these four libraries in respect of building, fittings, and maintenance. Every four years, the collection will grow by 100,000 publications. There has been no examination of this large rate of growth and whether the nation would have an adequate return on investing money in maintaining four collections of copies of identical publications. Immediately, the government can restrict the number of collections to be one and one only, by an executive order. When the Union Library Act comes into being, it can incorporate a few sections providing for one and only one National Copyright Library and one section repealing the Delivery of Books Act.

The best way to rationalise our system of national central libraries, which should form the apexes of the national library system, is to have a Union Library Act on the subject. The Union Library Act should provide for the following essential matters.

1. Creation of a Union Library Committee to advise the Union Government on the proper imple-

mentation of the Union Library Act:

2. Establishment and management of a National Copyright Library, and of the National Central Libraries for different subject-fields such as pure sciences, engineering, agriculture, medicine, humanities and social sciences, each with a service wing, dormitory wing, and documentation wing.

3. Co-ordination in respect of book collection and other items, among the national central libraries and the State library systems.

4. Cooperation among the national central libraries, the State central libraries, and other outlying libraries such as the academic and the special libraries in the country, in respect of national and State bibliographies, documentation work and documentation lists, technical work such as classification and cataloguing, inter-library loan, and such other matters, by mutual agreement among the participating libraries.

5. Creation of a Union cadre of librarians for the national central libraries and the other libraries of the Union Government.

6. Creation of a National Library Fund to meet the expenses of the national central libraries, of library grants to the State library systems, and of aiding the promotion of research in library science.

I may state here that, about twenty years ago, E. J. Carter, the then Director of the Libraries Division of Unesco, happened to study the Model Library Bills produced in India. These made him remark, even then, that India was leaping ahead of other countries in developing library legislation. I am quite sure that that statement of his will be re-confirmed now if we have a Union Library Act providing for a system of national central libraries and for a well-articulated national library grid which will lead to a better and fuller utilisation of the libraries in India.



# Books

It is quite natural that an analytical survey of the library scene in India would include a review of the premier library of the nation. Fortunately for us, a special committee appointed by the government 'to review the working of the National Library, Calcutta, and to suggest measures for its efficient functioning and future development' submitted its report in July, 1969.

Unfortunately, the report has not yet been officially released though a kind of summary of recommendations was placed on the table of the Rajya Sabha following persistent questionings. The poser of this symposium expects palliatives rather than cure for the 'crisis situation' facing the institution. A careful reading of the report and the minute of dissent added to it by the Member-Secretary makes it clear to persons familiar with the institution that the Committee has only added new problems. Distinguished people in the library world have already demanded rejection of the recommendations of this report without even reading it. Such an attitude will only help those in the Ministry of Education who want to suppress the report or to restrict its circulation. As a newsman with an additional interest in library and documentation science, I feel duty bound to present a review of the state of the National Library with reference to the report submitted by Dr. V. S. Jha and his colleagues.

One principal reason why the Jha Committee has failed to provide a useful report is the weakness in the composition of the Review Committee. When this body was announced in May, 1968, many in the Parliament and of the Press were surprised at the inclusion of the former and present librarians of the National Library as full members of the Review Committee. The present librarian, in whose selection the particular former librarian had a hand was also made the Member-Secretary of the Review Committee. Formerly a Vice-Chancellor and now a publisher, V. S. Jha, was made the Chairman of the Committee. The other three members were Hiren Mukherjee, M.P., Saibal Gupta, I.C.S. (Retd.) and V. K. Gokak, Vice-Chancellor.

Now let me begin with the main part of the report. The text of the first few chapters clearly indicates that it was written by the officers of the library and not by the staff or members of a Review Committee.

The first chapter is a summary from an official publication of the National Library. In the second chapter, the Review Committee has listed the functions which the institution was performing all these years. The National Library is also expected traditionally to provide leadership to the country in the planning and development of library services and also higher specialised education to the library and documentation professionals. But the self-seekers want more and new institutions. The main report also says 'the professional skeleton of the library should be clothed with the flesh and blood of scholarship and be vitalised'.

The most controversial recommendation of the Jha Committee is at the end of the third chapter. The Committee recommends the appointment of a Director of the National Library who should also be ex-officio Chairman of the Governing Council. The Director should be selected from *amongst distinguished scholars* with administrative competence. Professional librarians who have reached outstanding status and who command respect in the academic world, should also be eligible for appointment to the post. His salary and status should be comparable with those of the Vice-Chancellors of the Central Universities.

This will upset the managers of the Library Associations not only in Calcutta but also in New Delhi. Kalia, expressing representative opinion says 'the Head of a National Library should be an eminent professional librarian and not a scholar, however eminent he might be. The library profession has so much advanced during the last three quarters of the century' etc. etc.

The suggestion of the Jha Committee merits consideration and not hasty rejection. In the past, we had scholar librarians at the head of the university and other leading libraries. Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray, the present Chief of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study was the active librarian of the Calcutta University. A librarian with encyclopaedic range of knowledge and active reading habits is of immense value to any library.

The Review Committee must have come to its conclusion after analysing the type of students who seek admission to the library science diploma and degree

courses in our universities. In the last ten years, very few academically-brilliant students have come to library science as their first preference. Our reference libraries are still manned by persons who in their normal lives read hardly anything beyond fiction. Many of the boys and girls who ultimately come to secure B.Lib. degrees may also get higher degrees and some may secure a doctorate by preparing some kind of bibliographies also. But that does not make for scholarship.

A generalist non-professional scholar may well fit in to lead the national library and library movement. But we need not argue here at length. It is not that a non-professional scholar should be preferred but that technical qualifications in library science should be the main or major criterion in selecting the head of national libraries. Kalia has also objected to the proposal to run the library by a Governing Council instead of the present departmental working. But his arguments are not strong. Another important proposal of the Review Committee is to improve the operation of the Delivery of Books Act. At present, the National Library is not getting copies of a large number of volumes published in India (including government publications) though there is no provision to buy current Indian books. The Committee has advised for new legislation to link the delivery of books to the copyright concept. The Committee has also recommended that postal transmission of books for the National Libraries and the three other depositories should be free.

The Jha Committee has rightly rejected the arguments placed by the library authorities against stock verification proposals. There are reasons to believe that the library has lost many rare and valuable books through connivance of the staff members—and specially those officers who aspired to be feature writers in local newspapers. Among the persons who appeared before the Committee as witnesses, I find the name of a scholar who was detected redhanded for taking out a rare book without authorisation.

The Review Committee has also rightly recommended closing the lending section of the National Library and the report has presented a strong case on this. Many V.I.P.s including a former Union Law Minister did not care to return books borrowed from this library. The report has underlined the importance of provision of reprographic services at the Library which would immensely help the scholars outside Calcutta.

The Jha Committee has devoted a few pages to the Indian National Bibliography (INB) project but here also the majority is concerned with pre-1963 and post-1963 watershed. The INB project suffered from bottlenecks long before the new establishment took over the National Library. The right project was undertaken without taking due care and given a wrong leadership: in 1955 the INB Committee of the Education Ministry provided a right scheme but the National Library found their intellectual and

physical resources insufficient for the heavy task. 'The (Review) Committee feels very strongly that a publication which has aroused eloquent appreciation all over the world should not be allowed to languish.' But the Committee has underestimated its own responsibility and has just expressed pious hopes. It is a matter of great shame that today we have to rely on the Monthly Accession List published by the Library of U.S. Congress, New Delhi Centre, as bibliographical index to current Indian publications.

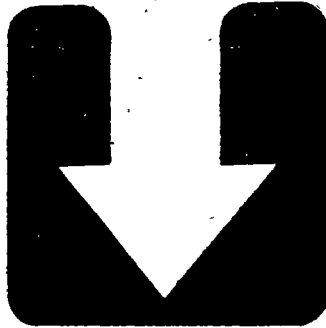
Even in the case of retrospective bibliography, the National Library showed criminal negligence and ignorance. In 1951, the Library of Congress at Washington, D.C., published a Bibliography of Indian Census and Famine Documents; but even this bibliography was not available at India's National Library in 1957-58. All these cannot be explained just by lack of sufficient funds. During the late 'fifties, other institutional libraries like that of the Statistical Institute was making considerable progress on modern scientific lines.

Though lack of funds has been mentioned for not providing so many essential items like reprographic services or fumigation chambers for rare manuscripts, the National Library lost money and energy to establish a Children's Library. After describing it as an 'accident', the Review Committee has tamely suggested the continuation of this childish appendix. What more can be referred to pinpoint the failure of the Review Committee.

Concluding, the Committee observes, 'it (National Library) compares so poorly with corresponding institutions in advanced countries that at least a few witnesses have been constrained to call it "a misnomer".'

The poser to the present symposium cannot imagine a National Library outside New Delhi. He has also pleaded for transfer of the Calcutta library to the State of West Bengal. This shows not only his monumental ignorance but also frustration and prejudice born out of factionalism. Even the Jha Committee has said 'it is wiser to build on foundations already laid, and Calcutta which was once the country's metropolis remains a vibrant city, symbolic of the growing pains of that resurgence which India is yearning for.' New Delhi now can boast of several specialised libraries but even the best one of them (say, ICWA-ISIS Library) cannot be the nucleus around which the next National Library can be developed. The main handicap is that we have too many ambitious self-seekers but too few dedicated competent experts.

Kalia, on the other hand, supports the contention to shift the paper-existent Central Reference Library from the shelter of the Calcutta institution to New Delhi. The nucleus can be formed by the immediate merger of the Central Secretariat Library of the Education Ministry with the Library of the Parliament. To meet the demand of the two Houses of



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S. Radhakrishnan  
Former President of India

## DONATE GENEROUSLY

Parliament, the expanded library may be known as the National Parliament Library. The new library may be housed in one wing of Shastri Bhawan while the Legislative Reference Wing and a reading room may continue to be in the old Narendra Mandal chamber.

A National Library Development Board should be soon formed under a special statute to coordinate the promotion of the new Central Library, the four specialised National Libraries, the INSDOC, the proposed National Social Science Documentation Centre (NSSDC) and the original National Library in Calcutta. The Board should be given at least Rs 15 million per year to begin with. Such a board should be completely independent of the philistine 'culture' bosses of the Education Ministry. The professionals should realize that their main enemy is not only within their own ranks but in the Secretariat which thrives on the creation and nurturing of factionalism among specialists.

The National Social Research Council has come after a long period of waiting. But it is doubtful whether the Social Science Documentation Centre will be established by 1971. The personnel of the Committees of the Council and the distribution of documentation responsibilities do not inspire confidence. The paid, the half-paid and honorary advisers of the Education Ministry continue to be the greatest obstacles to any planned programme of action.

One would plead for a charter of action and the presentation of it forcefully to the Government of the Republic in no uncertain terms.

D. B. R. Chaudhuri

**THE FIVE LAWS OF LIBRARY SCIENCE** By  
S. R. Ranganathan, Asia Publishing House, 1963  
**UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES FOR DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES**, By M. A. Gelfand, UNESCO, 1968

*The Five Laws of Library Science* is the most outstanding treatise on library science. It is work of a fundamental nature. In fact it is the 'Prolegomena' to Library Science. The implications of the Five Laws should be of general interest because of their application to the whole academic world of the present and of the future. The universe of knowledge relies on these laws for efficient information retrieval to scientists as well as social scientists. The Five Laws prepare the librarian or the information scientist to meet the challenges of computers.

The Five laws, as first enunciated by Dr. Ranganathan are well known (and given elsewhere in Ranganathan's article).

These are the normative principles governing and guiding each and every aspect of library science in

theory as well as in practice. Although they seem to be naive, obvious or trivial, especially the first one, they form the basic roots of the great tree of library science.

The implications of these Five Laws are explained by the author in such fascinating detail that after reading it one feels that one is reborn with a completely revolutionized outlook.

The mere statement 'Books are for use', as though at one stroke shatters the age-old traditional belief 'books are for preservation' and the traditional practice of 'closed access'. With the enunciation of this first law, he has once and for all broken away all the locks and declared freedom for books.

The First Law not only advocates 'open access', but also convenient location of libraries, convenient buildings, furniture, etc., and trained and efficient staff. For instance, Dr. Ranganathan challenges anyone by saying 'Show me your library furniture and I shall tell you whether you believe in the First Law of Library Science or not.'

With the Second Law, the author widens the horizon of knowledge embodied in books still further. Another traditional notion of 'Books for the chosen few' has been cut at the root by declaring 'Every Reader his Book'. Whether it is a child or a blind person, a villager or an urbaner, everyone is entitled to a suitable book. The Second Law propagates education to one and all. The whole field of library organization centres round this law. The evolution of library organization the world over, has been surveyed by the author to show the great success of the Second Law in a chapter entitled 'Second Law and its Digvijaya'.

The Third Law highlights the individuality of each book. 'Every Book its Reader', it says. No book should be neglected. Proper classification, cataloguing, display, publicity—all such factors bring each book to its appropriate reader.

The Fourth Law gives complete attention to the reader. It says, 'Save the time of the Reader'. It is not supposed to be a mere slogan. No aspect of library work can escape the scrutiny of this law. It embodies the spirit of library service.

'Library is a Growing Organism' is the Fifth Law. The three main parts of this organism are the books, the readers and the staff. This fundamental law forewarns library organizers and administrators in planning the future of a library or the library system of a country. In planning a library building, or allocating funds for a library or ordering furniture for a library or in choosing a scheme of classification or form of catalogue for a library, no administrator can afford to ignore the fact that library is a growing organism. The author, while proving the potentialities of the Fifth Law, says with a chuckle, 'taking the size of the reading room

first, it is seldom that the Fifth Law does not outwit the library authorities.'

The most fascinating part of this book is the 'dramatic part' introduced by the author with great imagination and sense of humour. The playwright in Dr. Ranganathan has created three dramatic scenes with the titles. 'A Dialogue', 'A Round Table' and 'A Departmental Conference' with interesting characters like 'First Law', 'Rule of Least Space', 'The Patient', 'The Psychologist', 'The Second Law', 'The Mother of the Dumb', 'The Illiterate', 'The Jailor', 'The Education Minister', and so on.

The Five Laws of Library Science were first enunciated by Dr. Ranganathan as far back as in 1928, although they were published as a volume three years later by the Madras Library Association. The second edition was brought out in 1957. It was later reprinted with minor amendments in 1963 under 'Ranganathan Series in Library Science' by the Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

Two fundamental changes have been incorporated in this edition. One is replacement of the narrower concept 'book' by the general term 'document'. The second is widening the scope of the term 'growth', concerning the Fifth Law. The most important aspect of this edition is the addition of the chapter on scientific method and library science which demonstrates how scientific methodology can be applied to library science. No one is left with any doubt about whether library science is a science or not.

The mathematical brain and the philosophical mind of Dr. Ranganathan are embodied in this outstanding work. No intellectual, whether in the library profession or outside, can but be enlightened by reading this book.

M.A. Gelfand's book is the 14th in the series 'UNESCO manuals for libraries'. Gelfand, Chief Librarian of the Paul Klapper Library, Queens College, New York, and an authority on university librarianship, was commissioned by the UNESCO to write a manual for university administrators, university teachers and librarians responsible for development of libraries in developing countries. This 157 page book is divided into 13 chapters, with an appendix containing a select reading list. The chapters cover broadly the role of university libraries in national development, the role of government in university affairs, organization and administration, staff, policies and procedures regarding acquisition, processing and reference services, besides planning and equipping library buildings and an overall evaluation of library services. Within a limited scope of 157 pages, the treatment is inevitably sketchy.

At a first glance, the manual may look impressive but when one comes to details, one is left with a vacant look ultimately. The statistical information

given is almost nil and no norms have been laid down in clear terms for university libraries in different developing countries. It might be a little ambitious on the part of the author and the publishers to expect the administrators in governments and universities to follow this book for practical guidance. This introductory manual, can, however, be safely recommended for the students of library science not only in developing countries but in the developed countries as well. UNESCO, who sponsored this manual, does not however share all the opinions expressed by the author. What we need in the present stage of library development is a manual containing international standards on library development and organization as laid down by an international organization like the UNESCO. Manuals on different aspects of library practice by experts in the related fields could then be sponsored by the organization within this framework.

A. Chāya Devi

#### **REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LIBRARIES, Planning Commission, 1966.**

It is a matter of gratification to note that the library movement in our country is gaining momentum every year. Libraries in India are slowly improving. National and State governments are at least conscious of the problem because they have realised the importance of public libraries as an instrument of education. While Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao was a member of the Planning Commission, he took keen interest in the development of public libraries in India by setting up a Working Group on libraries in 1964. It is a matter of regret that the report this Group submitted to the Planning Commission in 1966 has been shelved by the government.

The Working Group was specifically asked to consider the public library development programme with due emphasis on library services intended for children and rural people during the fourth five-year plan in the context of a ten year perspective. The Working Group formed four sub-committees to report on (i) the administrative set up; (ii) personnel training; (iii) book production and (iv) public library services and children's libraries in the country.

For preparing a detailed scheme of public library development, it was necessary to collect data on the present state of public library services in the States. The Working Group used the questionnaire method for this purpose. The data thus collected were compiled and given in annexure V of the report.

On the basis of this data, the Group recommended an over-all plan of public library development costing Rs. 30.99 crores. It also recommended 1.5 per cent of the total annual expenditure on education as

the golden mean. The Group outlined a scheme of phased and co-ordinated programme of library development so as to reach down to villages of over 2,000 population in the course of the next ten years. The report of the Group is comprehensive enough so as to cover the whole country with a network of libraries. By the end of the plan it was intended to have a unified library system within States, central libraries in all 18 States, 324 district libraries with a few lakhs of village libraries and centres of public libraries. The plan is obviously an ambitious one.

As the necessary finances have to come from central and State governments, the Working Group has prepared a Model Public Libraries Bill to be enacted by the government at central and State levels. The Group attaches great importance to library legislation as the foundations of a healthy public library system with the provision of free-book service for all.

The Working Group stresses the necessity of setting up immediately the machinery for implementing the library plan at two levels, with the Division of Libraries in the Ministry of Education at the Centre and a Directorate of Libraries at State level. Both of these authorities will have the benefit of the advice of the Centre and State Advisory Councils.

The Working Group has neither drawn up a plan for a national central library nor for a chain of national libraries at zonal level though for a viable structure of library system in a country there should be a national central library at the apex. If the Group had recognized the position of the National Library, Calcutta it, at least, should have provided for its future development in this framework.

In recommending finances for various types of libraries, the Group has not laid out any criteria for calculations. The proposal to provide equal amount of funds to 12 existing State central libraries makes one suspect that the Working Group has not realized the implications of its recommendations fully. It is apparent that the Group has assumed that all State central libraries are at the same stage of development, have the same problems and the same lack of facilities and the same type of clientele to be served.

In the Model Bill, the State central library has been made an integral part of the city library system. Thus the State central library will not only be a depository and reference library of the region but will also serve as a lending library of the city. In our opinion, these two functions should be performed separately.

The proposal to set up three more model libraries in the country is welcome. The model libraries need not however be patterned on the Delhi Public Library with its limitations.

Although the functions of library authorities at various levels, have been given in detail in the re-

port, it is not quite clear how the work of various authorities will be coordinated.

On balance, the report of the Working Group on libraries is a valuable contribution to the cause of public library development in the country because it clearly aims at providing planned and co-ordinated library service free to one and all. The rightful stress on the need for the enactment of library legislation at central and State level will have far-reaching effects on the future development of the public library system in India, if implemented by the government.

The report should not be treated as an exercise in futility. Let us hope that some of the recommendations will see the light of day in the new five-year plan.

Shaukat Ashraf

#### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES:**

**UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION**, (Great Britain). London, HMSO, 1967. (Chairman : Thomas Parsy)

#### **REPORT OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARIES COM-**

**MITTEE**, London, HMSO, 1969. (Chairman : Fred Dainton).

One notable characteristic of a healthy society is its capacity to subject itself, at regular intervals, to rigorous scrutiny and introspections. Looked at from this stand-point British librarianship has done exceptionally well in the sixties. Beginning with the Roberts Committee (1958) through the Haytor Committee (1961), the Baker Committee (1961), the Parry Committee (1967) and climaxed by the Dainton Committee (1969), it has in a short span of about a decade carried out a thorough probe into almost all aspects of the library system of the country.

The first report under review is the result of an all round appraisal of the university libraries. The Committee, appointed in 1963, took about four years to collect and sift its data through evidence, survey and on-the-spot visits. In addition to carrying on its own surveys, the Committee also made use of surveys carried out independently at the universities of Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds. A Standing Conference on National and University Libraries (SCONUL) provided it with financial standards for a university library, drawn after a careful sifting of data regarding the price trend, publishing trend, subjectwise breakdown of acquisition, binding charges, allowance for possible rise in price and provision for likely increase in periodicals, subscription, etc.

The Committee was charged with the responsibility to consider the most effective and economical

arrangements for meeting the needs of the Universities and Colleges of Advanced Technology and Central Institutions for books and periodicals. . ."

With these comprehensive terms of reference the Committee set out to study the functions of a university library vis-a-vis the various categories of its users; the role of cooperation; inter-library loan service; nature of collections; acquisition of library materials; cooperative acquisition of foreign material; the national library; accommodation; library services; library techniques; administration and staffing and finance.

The result is a document which has already acquired the status of a basic textbook. In a review like this, one cannot cover the whole set of recommendations. Left to the alternative of being selective we choose those aspects that have a direct bearing and immediate relevance to our own requirements. Taking finance as an instance, the Committee has recommended six per cent of the total university budget for being allotted to libraries. Of course, the Committee concedes that this figure is larger than the overall average obtaining in the British universities, but adds that it is 'not a large portion in relation to the significance of the library within a university'. It may not be out of place here to recall that the Radhakrishnan Committee

had recommended 6.5 per cent of the university budget for library purposes.

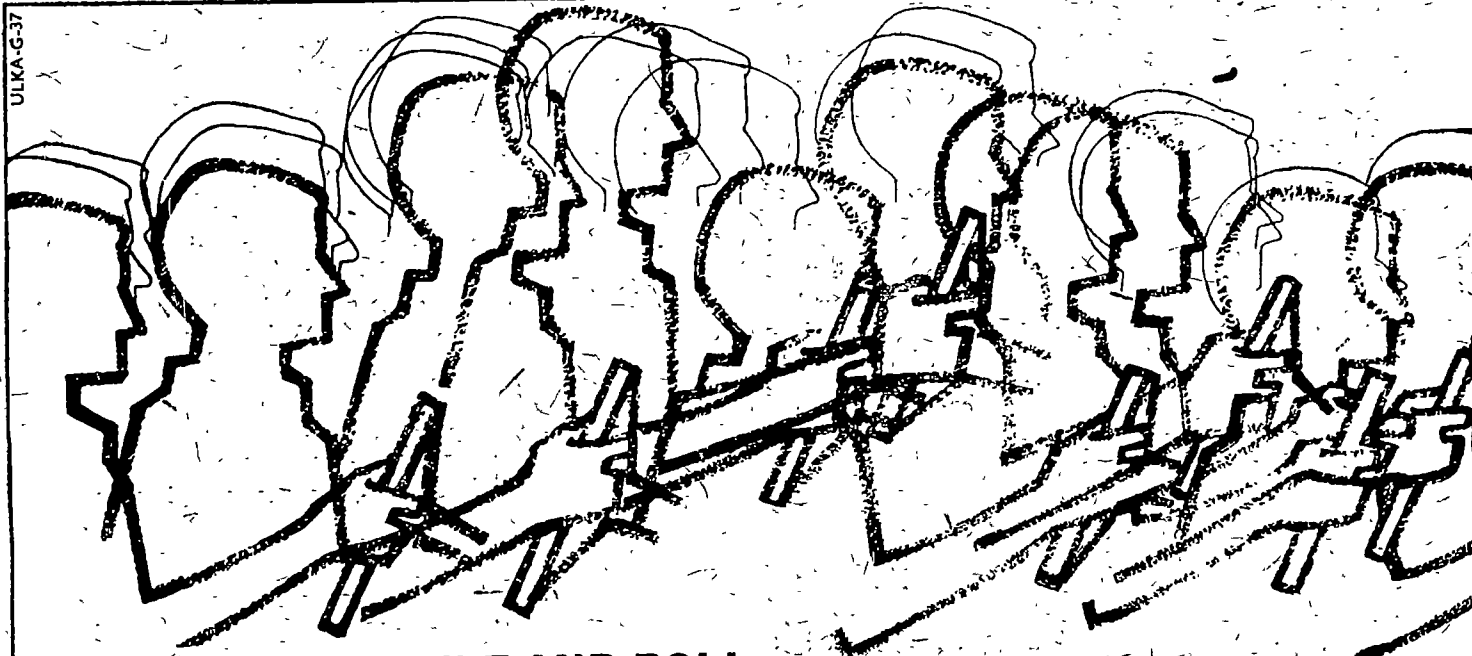
The Committee has come out boldly against the department-wise allocation of book grants. 'Any strict allocation by the department,' the Committee says, 'is not necessarily in the best interest of the Library. . .'

It is in the context of the acquisition of foreign material that the Committee has laid its stress on cooperation among libraries on a national scale. After a careful study of the Farmington and several other plans, the Committee recommends the fullest possible coverage of foreign literature in the humanities and social sciences under a rational acquisition plan.

The most pertinent set of recommendations relate to the future reorganisation of the British Museum Library which consequent upon the acceptance of the recommendations would become the British National Library. 'The National Library would be the focal point for all library development in the country'.

As if to carry the probe further from where the Parry Committee had left it, the National Libraries Committee was appointed in December 1967. It was asked to examine the functions and organisations

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**YOU SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL—**



of the British Museum Library in association with three other libraries of national importance.

The Committee very wisely decided upon utilising the expert services of the *Economist's* Intelligence Unit for carrying out a sample survey of the users of the British Museum. The Committee also thought it proper to expand its scope so as to cover the British National Bibliography and the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales.

In the end the Committee has come out in favour of a unified national library system. The British Museum Library and the other four would be administered by a National Library Authority as the chief executive body. Taking its cue from the Parry Committee, the Dainton Committee has also recommended conversion of the library part of the British Museum into a National Reference Library. Thus on age-old tradition of governing the Museum and the Library would be given the go-bye.

As regards future development, the Committee would like the government to examine the feasibility of establishing machinery to provide advice on policy concerning the development and coordination of national information services.

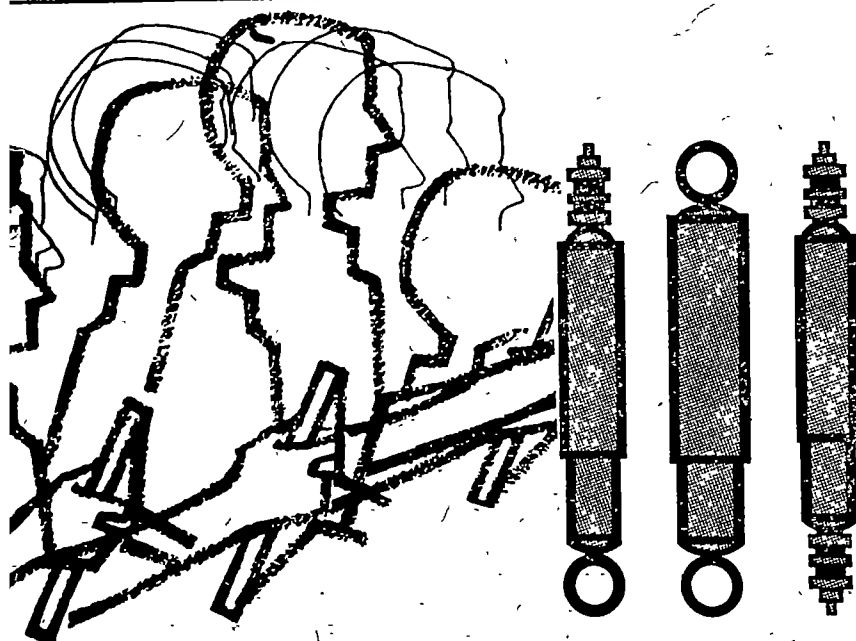
Some of its findings are likely to lead to mixed reactions. For instance, its proposals with regard to the site for future expansion of the British

Museum Library which is at variance with government policy. Its observation that 'there are now virtually no formal arrangements for cooperation in the acquisition of foreign material in the humanities and the social sciences' will be strongly contested by the authorities of the Standing Conference for Library Material on Africa (SCOLMA) and a few other similar organisations.

It has, however, rightly struck a note of urgency with regard to the need for a detailed study about feasibility of applying automatic data processing to various library operations.

Both the reports would be very relevant in the context of the chaotic and confused thinking prevailing in our country. Their suggestion for creating a permanent body both at the UGC level and at the central government level; their emphasis for a unified national policy in regard to acquisition of material as well as planning of various library services, deserve due attention. At the same time, we cannot take their proposed structure as a model for our library system. The sheer vastness of our country, its regional diversities and the relatively low level of collection at most of the libraries are some peculiar problems which would have to be studied in their proper perspective before we draw a blue-print of our own.

S. Ansari



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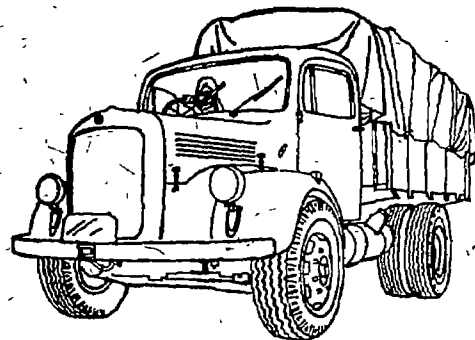
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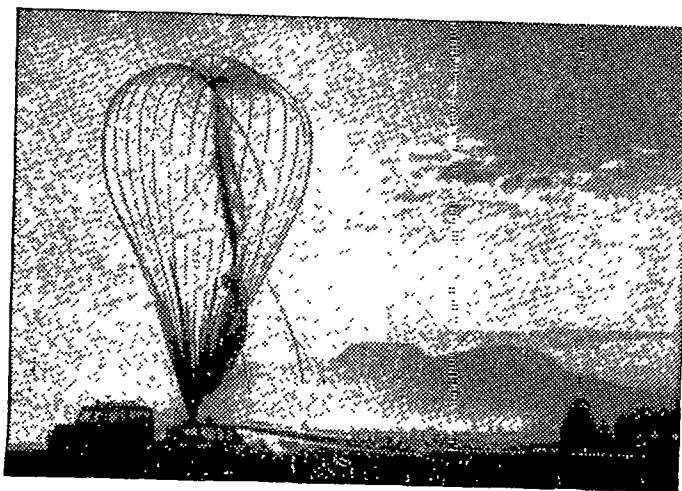
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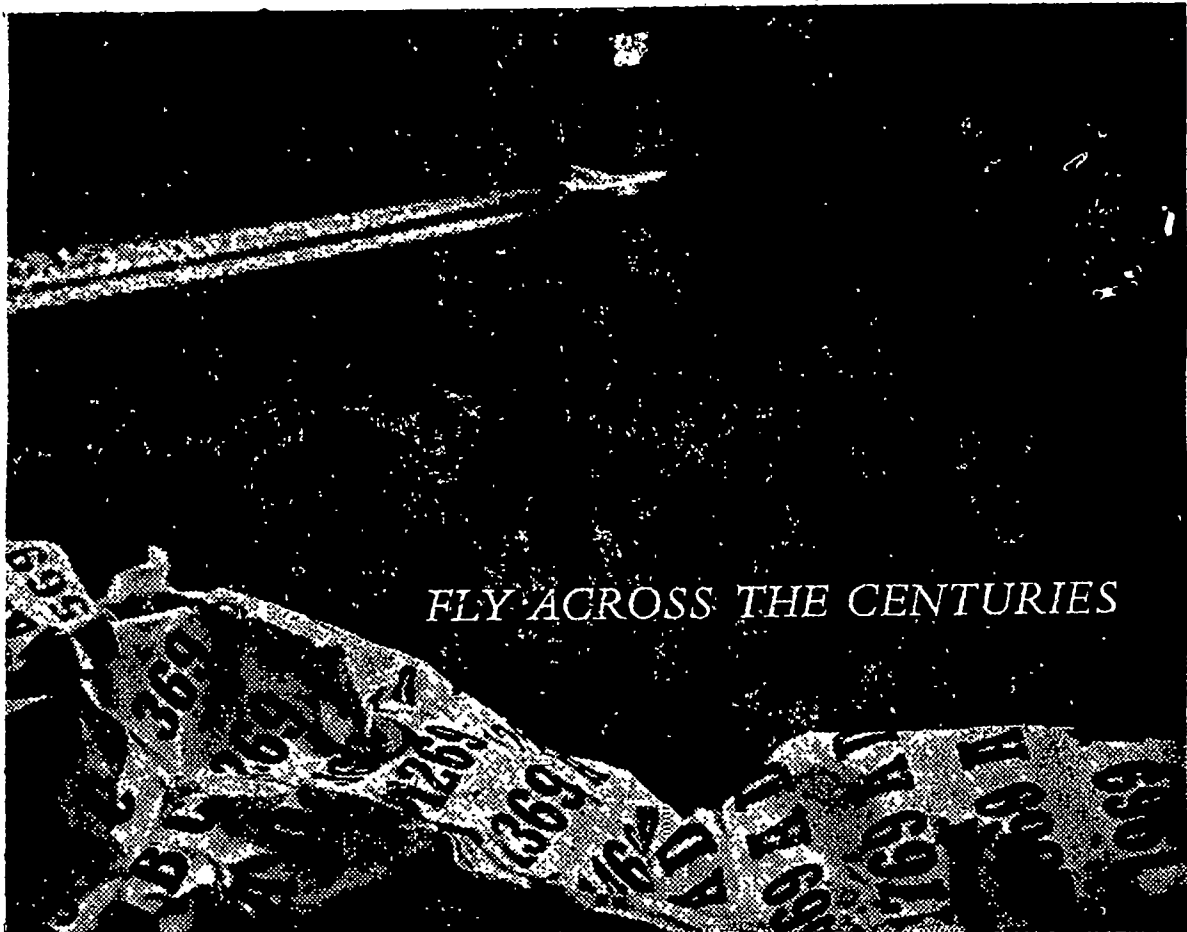
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